LETITIA BERKELEY, A.M.

JOSEPHINE · BONTECOU · STEFFENS

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A NOVEL

BY

JOSEPHINE BONTECOU STEFFENS

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PART I

LETITIA BERKELEY, A. M.

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CHAPTER I

A FLASH IN THE DARKNESS

LETITIA BERKELEY had come to a crisis in her life whose meaning she did not, could not understand, because, though she was an exceptionally clever and well-instructed young woman, education had left her, as it leaves most women, ignorant of that most essential science: the knowledge of herself in her physiological and psychological significance. She could read Greek and Latin with that feet-on-the-fender ease which Lord Macaulay regarded as the test of classic scholarship, but of her own body, of its structure and its organic relations to her kind, she was in that state of ignorance which the sentimental call innocence, forgetting that there comes a time when innocence becomes ignorance, fraught too with all the dangers of ignorance. But though Letitia did not know the meaning of the psycho-physical change that was taking place within her,

she could feel its effects in soul and body; feel an intense unrest, and a longing vague yet strong; feel a growing distaste for her placid surroundings and a passionate desire for an experience other than she was getting in the narrow confines of a country college for women; feel herself perturbed and shaken from her studious calm by the working of these forces whose nature she did not yet divine, but whose power she was compelled to yield to as a boat tossing rudderless obeys the tide.

She had come to this crisis gradually enough through various stages of development: a stern and motherless childhood passed with her ex-missionary father, become professor in a small New England college. Then undergraduate and graduate years of scholarly achievement, not indeed wholly admirable with their dross of petty passions: vanity of her attainments; vanity of her personal attractions, which the gush or envy of other girls promptly confirmed to her; envy in her turn of the finer clothes and more brilliant social prospects of her wealthier mates, whom she took an especial pleasure in distancing in their common intellectual pursuits. Then the next stage of her first teaching with its nobler sentiments—interest in the excellence of others, interest in her work, and the fine sense of power that comes with the successful performance of the elected rôle. Glorified as hers was by youth and beauty, it soon made her an object of adoration to her girls. And the incense they offered her was sweet to her at first despite its sub-scent of sickly sentiment, like

the odour of manure her keen olfactories could detect beneath the perfume of the choice hothouse flowers which the rich among these worshippers squandered their pin-money to lay upon her shrine. Sometimes it was a bouquet, tied to her door-knob by fluttering young hands that feared to knock and disturb her; or she would be summoned to visit a sick disciple, afflicted often with no worse disorder than an inexplicable desire to lie in bed and have this charming young teacher sit beside her, holding her hand and talking to her in soothing, sympathetic tones.

Finally the climax was reached when one of these maiden lovers, who had used a pretty talent for verse-making to write flaming love poems to her, flung eager arms around her one evening in the moonlight, and kissed her with a fervour that fluttered, abashed her, and repelled. For her riper nature the little act was like a flash of light in darkness, revealing to her forms where only vague outlines, dim as shadows' shadows had been before.

From that moment Letitia felt herself out of touch with her surroundings.

"I have studied, and thought, and taught, but I have had no experience of real life; I have never really *lived*," she said in explanation to her father, defending herself against his disapproval of her decision to seek for herself another and a different scene of action. Her father—professor emeritus by this time, retired on a pension,—naturally regarded as wildest folly this deliberate sacrifice of a snug tutor-

ship with its sure prospect of a professorial crown later on for the uncertainties and competition of a great city.

"But they are precisely what I want!" responded Letitia impetuously, "for they are life, and I want to live. I must, I will have my share of it too, the real life of the real world. For this is not a real world that I live in here, this scholarly seclusion. I am a mere book-worm here, I should never be anything else, and I want to be a woman too. I want to see as well as know. To feel, the whole full gamut of emotion. Yes, I even want, if it be necessary to a full experience, to—to suffer."

"See to it that you do not add unto that—*sin!*" was the father's stern reply.

The daughter started and her flush of exaltation fell, and her face quivered with the rush of rising tears. But she choked them back as sternly as her father could have done, repressing herself before him as she had always had to do. She would fain have said more, all; have sought in this strong old man's experience the solution of much that was troubling her, but the barrier of reticence that stands between most parents and children, most seniors and juniors, on so many of life's important questions, repelled her, as a wall of rock repels the storm-lashed sea.

CHAPTER II

THE QUEST FOR THE UNKNOWN.

To New York Letitia went in her unrest. Provided by her father with letters to prominent members of the religious sect to which he belonged, she soon had pupils enough to insure her the wherewithal to live within the humble limits of a fourth floor back hall bedroom in a third-rate boarding-house. Her little room was typical of a class, with its six by twelve dimensions and its sham furniture which was one thing by day and another at night. The bed that looked like a curtained bookcase—Letitia lending herself to the deception by setting a row of books Greek, Latin, and philosophy along the shelf that topped it; the bureau, opposite, which seemed to be a writing-desk, though the lid that gave it that appearance could only be let down when the bed was a bookcase; the washstand, another hybrid, swallowing up pitcher and bowl beneath a cover whereon Letitia, who was fond of flowers, kept a pot of them, and various knick-knacks which had to be removed each time she washed her hands. A cane-bottomed chair, a "rocker," and a gas stove with a corrugated copper front to represent flame,

completed the details of the box-like refuge for which she paid eight dollars a week, including board.

A sensitive woman is sensitive to her surroundings. Letitia was to hers. Their inadequacy oppressed her as the routine of teaching, into which she was again sunk, oppressed her with a sense of baffled expectation. She was still teaching young girls in the callow state. "Embryos!" she exclaimed to herself one day impatiently. "Is teaching always going to keep me dealing with embryos till I dry up without having got beyond that state myself—a sort of mummified embryo,—like the teachers at college? I want to meet grown-up people—the men and women I see here in the streets, with lines in their faces, scars of living and doing."

The opportunity came to her at last, some weeks after her arrival, in the form of a letter, badly written and badly spelled, requesting her to call at a house in Madison Avenue with a view to a secretary's position. The mistress of the house and writer of the note was, she found on calling at the appointed time, a prominent member of the fashionable Fifth Avenue church where her letters of introduction, and a clientèle of pupils drummed up for her by the senior deacon's wife, compelled her to put in a regular though unwilling appearance. Church, like school and teaching, had come to pall upon her. From her seat here and there as the hospitality of patrons offered, she had already remarked this stout elderly woman's coarse person and fine clothes.

"I want you to come here every day for a couple of hours, and write my letters, answer my invitations and that sort of thing," explained Mrs. Ball in a harsh, uncultivated voice. "I was never much at writin',"—Letitia, thinking of the note she had received, believed her—"and I haven't got the time now to practise at it. Then you'll have the household accounts, and after that you can give me er—what do you call it? of the last novel."

"A résumé, perhaps," suggested Letitia.

"Yes, that's it. They're always talkin' 'bout novels at their dinners, but I don't believe they get time to read 'em any more than I do."

Letitia objected that she herself certainly had not the time to keep up with current literature, especially the fiction.

"Oh, Lord, I don't ask you to *read* the stuff either," exclaimed Mrs. Ball. "Just get the names of 'em, and who they're by, and where the story's laid. You'll know how to do that, I guess, without spendin' much time—you book people must have your tricks of the trade too."

Letitia felt inclined to resent this, then she laughed, for the accusation was not altogether unjust.

"A character at last, a piece of real life, praised be the gods!" she exclaimed to herself as she took her departure, after having arranged to enter upon her duties the next day. "But of what phase of life? who give the dinners at which she wishes to air the result of this book person's tricks?"

The most prominent people in New York society, she found, on opening the dainty notes of gay import that lay waiting her attention, next morning, on the stout working desk that had been arranged for her use in a second-floor room at the extreme rear of Mrs. Ball's elegant house. There was no elegance here, however, she noted with inward amusement, as the butler—in shirt-sleeves and old trousers at this work-a-day hour—raised the handsome portière that concealed from passers through the main hall a narrow door opening on the oil-cloth covered backstairs passage, at the end of which was the plain room where her utilitarian duties were to be performed. In addition to her desk and chair there was a telephone and a district messenger call. The carpet on the floor was faded and old, but the windows, which the neighbours could see, were elaborately curtained with fine lace, and there was a comfortable rocking-chair for Mrs. Ball. She was already seated in it, ready for business, and she glanced surreptitiously at her watch as her new secretary entered.

Letitia's quick eye caught the movement with a flash of resentment, for she was habitually punctual.

Mrs. Ball, all unconsciously, added fuel to the fire she had stirred. "If there's anything more in that line that you want, you can have it, you know," she remarked, thus directing Letitia's attention to a pile of volumes on the desk:—A Manual of Spelling, Aids to Letter Writing, and several dictionaries.

"Asses' bridges," exclaimed the master of arts to herself in towering scorn as she read the titles, "for *me*!" Aloud she said in a voice that was as icy as the fire within was hot: "I am hardly likely to need what you have here. In fact, if you don't mind, I would rather not have them encumbering my desk."

Mrs. Ball ought to have been crushed, but she wasn't. Indeed there was something very like a twinkle in her eye. "Mind," she repeated, "Of course I don't mind. If you don't want 'em on your desk, when you get through with my work this morning you can put 'em on the mantelpiece."

"*When you get through with my work!*" For the first time in her life Letitia had been made to feel like a hireling, a servant! She sat down to Mrs. Ball's work in a temper that argued ill for a continuance of her part in it. The first thing she had to do was to write an acceptance to an invitation from one of the social elect. Letitia happened to have heard of the lady. "And New York's fashionable society will tolerate *you!*" she thought, flashing a look of disdain at Mrs. Ball as she folded into its envelope the note she had dashed off with a few swift practised strokes.

The morning light fell as mercilessly as Letitia's wide young gaze upon Mrs. Ball, betraying her sixty years, the inelegant details of her short, rotund figure; the coarse quality of her thick, white hair, which was scrupulously well arranged about a face that was ruddy and full with the effects of good living.

Her hands, glittering with rings, were big, hard, and ugly; signs manual of a working time when she was not the sort of a social factor she now strove to be. In fact, Mrs. Ball's origin showed itself in every way and at every turn through the thin veneer of pseudo-fashion which she had acquired by contact with the polite world. But one talent she had, in one thing she was expert and admirable, and that was the manipulation of money. Letitia had discovered this in their first interview, when her remuneration had been reduced to lowest terms. Now Mrs. Ball, in the pauses of their work together, was scanning the stock returns in the morning papers, with a keen look of interest in her small light eyes.

"D. L. and W. 156," she read half aloud. "It's not going to get much higher than that, this boom anyway." A moment of thought, then she rose and went to the telephone.

"Hello!" she shouted, when she had got the connection she wanted. Letitia would no more have shouted hello through a telephone than she would have whistled in the street.

"Is Mr. Blank there yet?" asked Mrs. Ball. "Oh. Good morning. Say, sell my D. L. and W., and buy me a thousand shares of B. Q.—Oh, is it?" and she chuckled back over the wire at some Wall Street wit, presumably. "Well, I'll risk it all the same. What?—Who?—Oh. What's the rate to-day?—All right, let him have it, but not more'n ten thousand. Good-bye," and she hung up the mouthpiece, rang off, and resumed her seat.

"They're willin' enough to borrer from a woman, and to buy and sell for her, and to take her in—if she'll let 'em, *if she will let them.* But they ain't willin' to let her come down there and fight her own battle out for herself on the floor, face to face, as man to man."

Letitia looked and listened in surprise; the woman's whole appearance was transformed; the fat red face had taken on an intellectual expression—eyes alert and keen, lips compressed in shrewd self-confidence and power.

"The problem is solved," thought the girl. "Madam is a financier, and has bought her way into the world whose 'every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys.'"

CHAPTER III

THE HOUR AND THE MAN

Of course Letitia did not do what, in the heat of her temper, she had cooled herself by vowing that she would do: end her engagement with Mrs. Ball with the end of that first "day's work" for her. That remark, especially the manner of it, still stuck, but she soon got where she could enjoy the humour of it too. Mrs. Ball was an immense relief from the tiresome repetition of immature girlhood to which she had begun to fear that she was definitively doomed. Crude and vulgar though she was, and offensive to the girl's fine culture, Mrs. Ball was a character, ripe and shrewd; strong to insolence, free of speech, and cynical with that cynical insight into life and into men that only intimate acquaintance with them in, or in the way of marriage, gives a woman.

Now it was precisely of men that Letitia was thinking just then a great deal. They had not as yet played much of a part in her life though a man had brought her up. But such a man! A dried-up, burned-out, self-repressed old scholar, under whose roof men in the ordinary sense had been practically

tabooed. Eight years in a woman's college had of course been even more destitute of them. All this had, however, been indifferent to her, till of late the stirring within her of hitherto unfelt forces was bringing her to regard the matter in another light. Physiologically she was ready to love, but her intelligence had not yet grasped the fact that it was this lack of the masculine element in her life, rather than its overplus of the feminine, that was the cause of her present dissatisfaction with it.

Mrs. Ball, however, saw and said bluntly, as was her wont. "*You* ought to get married! You're han'some enough to get a husband just on your looks!" she exclaimed one morning when Letitia came in with her beauty all aglow from a quick walk in keen, invigorating air. Several weeks of intercourse had resulted in a certain degree of cordiality between these women, diverse though they were.

"I don't want a husband," said Letitia proudly, resenting, and yet at the same time feeling inwardly surprised that she did resent, the reproach of her single state implied in this remark.

"Every woman wants a husband if she hasn't got one, or hasn't had one," replied Mrs. Ball brutally. "And every woman ought to want one too. If she's got any sense she knows she don't know what life is, what men are, till she's wifed it with one of 'em."

"She only knows what one of them is like, then, does she?" returned Letitia simply, but with an edge

to her tone, subtle as the acid in milk. "Men aren't all of one pattern, any more than women, are they?"

"In their dealin's with women—yes. If you've been there once you know what it means with one and all of them." And Mrs. Ball laughed or rather chuckled in a way she had, a chuckle that implied a great deal.

Letitia felt, as she often did in Mrs. Ball's clutches, like a cat rubbed the wrong way—she wanted to scratch.

"I'm goin' to give a german, a cotillion as they call it," said Mrs. Ball after a pause.

"Shall *you* lead?" asked Letitia blandly, but with a cruel glance at the other's unterpsichorean proportions.

The shaft was lost, however, for Mrs. Ball's reply was, "Lord no, girl; I don't dance, as you might know by lookin' at me. But you don't have to dance to give balls in New York or to go to 'em either. All you need is a ball-room, or money enough to hire one and give a ball in your turn. They always make me one of their chaperones because I've got a ball-room, and always give 'em a dance when I think they want me to. There isn't every house in New York that's got one; there's mighty few houses anywhere, if I do say it, that's got two such floors to spread out in as mine are when I throw 'em open for one of their performances. Mr. Ball did the thing up in style when he built this house, and I do the thing up in style

when I entertain in it. I let the florists have their head, and I tell you when all's ready it don't look bad."

Mrs. Ball was justly proud of her house: it was a beautiful one. She or her husband, or the two of them together, had had the good sense not to trust to their own taste, but to call in artists in the decorative line, and the result was pleasing forms, harmonious colours, statuary, pictures that were real gems—an abode, in short, fit for a prince. No wonder this rich, illiterate woman was proud of it, and of her wealth which had bought it for her, and social position to boot.

"No, I'm not going to lead," she resumed after another pause. "But Philip Euston is. He leads all the best germans this winter. He's one of the heaviest of their heavy swells.—Yes, yes; he *is* a heavy swell," and she chuckled again in her short-necked way, with so much meaning that Letitia looked up surprised from the papers she was arranging, to see malice and hatred darkening the face where pride and importance had just been smiling so prosperously. But the next moment these sinister clouds were gone, and Mrs. Ball was adding: "He's comin' here to-morrer mornin' with the list of invitations, and you're to write 'em and take down his directions 'bout favours and the rest of it. I give the swells their head too, when they come to serve me."

Mrs. Ball was superb as she said this; but it was all lost on Letitia whom she had thrown into a flurry

of inward excitement by her announcement of the morrow's task. A morning with a heavy swell! Young! Handsome perhaps! A gentleman! Attractive!—Then she brought herself severely to book:—

"What difference will it make to me what he is, or how he looks! What will he see in me, but what Mrs. Ball sees? A hireling, a sort of educated helot, a caligraphic machine!—And what do I care what he is or what he sees; for what is he? A man? Bah! A leader of germans; an empty-headed carpet knight!"

This contemptuous conclusion did not, however, prevent her from rising earlier than usual next morning in order to make a more than usually careful toilet; arranging her hair in the most becoming way and putting on her best gown, which was still a plain enough one, fortunately, to leave unspoiled by any trimming the luscious outline of her shoulders, bust, and arms.

There was something of a flurry too, at Mrs. Ball's, as she found on arriving. Instead of leaving her to go her own way to the humble room in the L, the butler, in full livery, conducted her to Mrs. Ball's boudoir: a dainty nook in the front of the house, with a bay window full of flowers and blue satin furnishings. The writing-desk here was an elegant little specimen of marquetry and gilt that made Letitia think of Madame de Pompadour and the gay Du Barry as she seated herself in the fancy gilt chair before it.

Mrs. Ball, in silk négligée, looked flattered and expectant.

Preceded by some delay, Mr. Philip Euston arrived. This distinguished leader of germans and man-about-town, was somewhat under thirty and handsome. A well set-up figure, brown hair and moustache, fine teeth and fine grey eyes being parts of a whole whose charm was enhanced by exceeding grace and good breeding. To be sure a keen eye would have seen traces of dissipation in the handsome face, and there was that lack of force in its expression that betrays the idle, mediocre man.

When Mrs. Ball had exchanged the usual greetings with him, she waved a careless hand toward Letitia. "My secretary," she said, as if the girl were indeed a mere machine.

But the handsome fellow bowed as to a queen, and with eyes that sought hers to say frankly and gallantly, "We're charmed." In fact they were, having discovered at the first glance as their owner crossed the threshold that an uncommonly fine piece of female flesh and blood was there for their delectation.

Letitia, however, quite unaware of the impression she had made, responded stiffly to his bow and, without deigning him the glance he sought, re-seated herself and took up her pen, ready to play the part to which she was so sure he would assign her.

Nothing daunted he placed himself deliberately

and skilfully where if she looked up anywhere but at the wall before her she would have to look at him; remarking the while to Mrs. Ball:—"I was up with these lists of yours at the club last night, or rather this morning till the servants threatened to turn the lights out over my head."

"I hope you ain't exhausted," she replied, with such evident irony that Letitia nearly forgot her part in her desire to see if the debonair young gentleman had himself perceived it.

If he had he did not show it, for he deprecated gently, "Oh, no. But it will excuse me, I hope, for having been so rude as to keep you waiting." His smile would have included Letitia too, if she had chosen to look up and receive her share of it. "A beauty, by Jove!" was his inward comment. "Why the devil doesn't she raise those delicious sweeping lids—regular houri lids they are—so one can see if her eyes match her hair."

Splendid hair it was, thick and long and the colour of an oak-leaf in autumn, and her eyes did match it, as this connoisseur of beauty hoped they would. But she did not oblige him by allowing him to find that out just then, for she kept them fixed on the sheet of paper whereon she was waiting to inscribe at his dictation from his pencilled slips the names of those who were to receive Mrs. Ball's engraved invitations.

"She can take down the names now, so you can see that she gets 'em right, and the rest she can do after you get through with her," said Mrs. Ball, while

Letitia wondered if it was contrast merely, or if she was really coarser and brusquer than usual that morning.

At any rate she had made the courteous young man fairly shudder. "I'm sure if any mistakes are made," he exclaimed, rising and approaching Letitia's desk, "they will be mine, not Miss—"

"Berkeley's her name," said Mrs Ball.

"Ah, thanks.—They will *not* be Miss Berkeley's." He got what he was after, at last. Letitia looked up at him with a blush and a smile.

Whereupon handsome Philip, having had his way, allowed the work of the morning to proceed.

"My gracious, I do hope those girls'll get partners!" exclaimed Mrs. Ball, as he read, Miss Deadstone, Miss Hypatia Deadstone,—pronouncing it as if it were spelt "stun". "It does make me that nervous to see them plastered up against the wall, tryin' to look as if they don't mind if the men do neglect them."

"I've provided for Rizzy already," said Philip, laughing irreverently, "and I'll make Dicky Smalley dance with Hypatia."

"Well, you'll have a hard time doin' it," replied Mrs. Ball. "He raked her over fearful to me only last night. Said her bones were a disgrace to New York society; and the thinner she gets, the lower she cuts her dresses; and he could count two-thirds of the—what's those knuckles in the backbone, Miss Berkeley?"

"Do you mean the vertebræ?" asked Letitia,

regarding the point of her pen as if she had not seen it before.

"That's the word. He said he could count from where we sat two-thirds of the vertebræ in her backbone, but she walked and danced as stiff as if she was—was—"

"Invertebrate," suggested Letitia with a gleam of mischief about her lips and her downcast eyes.

"Invertebrate! Right you are again, Miss Dictionary. He said he could count two-thirds of her vertebræ, so he knew she had 'em, but she walked and danced as stiff as if she was invertebrate, like a grasshopper."

"By Jove! Did Dicky get off all that by himself?" exclaimed Philip. "He must have been taking something unusual."

"He'd only been takin' some of the Slimwells' slim claret punch. The champagne gave out early."

"Ah, as usual," said Philip, and then they both laughed.

Such were the remarks that interrupted the dictation again and again—merciless criticism, malice, and insinuation. To Letitia it seemed as if everybody on the young man's list was either ridiculous or vicious.

"And he is content to fritter away his manhood in such society!" she said to herself scornfully when, the work being over, Mrs. Ball left the room for a moment.

Perhaps he saw her scorn in her face; perhaps he felt it, or perhaps he only wanted to make the most

of the opportunity that Mrs Ball's absence gave him of speaking with her alone, of forcing her to look into his eyes. At any rate he came and leaned against her desk, and said in a tone of excuse :—

"You know, Miss Berkeley, you can't help seeing the weaknesses of your fellow-mortals when you meet them daily, week in and week out, the whole year round."

"I think it is abominable," she exclaimed with flashing eyes, "to speak of women as if they were anatomical specimens!"

"Why, by gad, it's their own fault when they strip themselves down to it!" cried Philip, at once angry and defensive. "Damn her," was his thought, "I verily believe she disapproves of me!"

Letitia threw up her head, but dropped the subject. "I take it you are through with me," she remarked, with a curl to her lip, beginning to gather up her papers.

"If you choose to put it that way—yes," he replied, still a little vexed but with a courteous appeal in his tone against her way—Mrs Ball's way—of putting it. His voice was delicious in all its tones :—suave and deep and well-bred. It soothed the fine-eared girl like a caress. It made her look up at him now with a gay and friendly laugh that banished his temper too. As she rose, preparatory to leaving the room, he held his hand out winningly :—

"Shake hands with me, won't you, Miss Berkeley? and let me tell you how much obliged to you I am

for being here this morning, for being so—but I suppose I mustn't say it."

He could look his admiration though, and he did; and Letitia let him take her hand and hold it for a moment in a pressure that thrilled her from top to toe. Then she left him hastily, angry at herself and at him.

"I despise him, I despise him, I despise him!" she assured herself, as she retreated in a flutter that belied her to her back work-room. "A regular Louis Quatorze, so gallant that he must doff his hat to the meanest coif he meets, and yet in his heart regards all women as mere instruments for his pleasure."

CHAPTER IV

THE INEVITABLE SEQUENCE

FOR the next fortnight Letitia was absorbed in the cotillion. Mrs. Ball could think of nothing else, and not a day passed without one or more consultations with Philip Euston. Indeed, he came so often, and always with the demand to see Letitia on one pretext or another, that if Mrs. Ball had not been so completely occupied with the many details of her entertainment she must have seen that it was not exclusively these which brought him. Letitia, however, did see it, and the unexpected tribute affected her in an unexpected way. She was honest in her first contempt for this man, a feeling that was deepened by the devotion he showed to the smallest details of the affair that seemed to her a wretched mockery, with the double-dealing, backbiting, and general chicanery it entailed. She felt herself immeasurably superior to him, poor bread-winner though she was, with her good brain stocked with knowledge whose very alphabet was unknown to him, and her cultured tastes which made her scorn all that he seemed to prize. But to the sensual side of her nature his

handsome person and unfailing grace strongly appealed, and the well-bred self-assurance, and *savoir faire* with which he obtruded himself upon her was just what was best calculated to make him the object of her present subjective state. The vague, diffused needs of her nature crystallised into form—his form, which gave to her sleeping and waking dreams the plastic reality of a central figure, and she soon found herself thinking about him when he was not with her and enjoying him when he was.

But she kept this change of feeling well concealed beneath a proudly-reserved demeanour, which at once baffled and allured Philip Euston. He was not accustomed to such treatment from women. He liked them, when they were handsome, whatever their class, and it was as much a matter of course for him to be liked where he liked, as to have food when he was hungry. Hence his assiduity at first, though before a week was out something stronger even than his vanity was driving him on. Moreover, to the credit of this worldling it should be said, there was a good deal of genuine kindness and debonair fellow-feeling beneath his worldly crust. His manner to Mrs. Ball was evidence of this. He was a refined person in his way, and the unrefined woman's vulgarities doubtless rasped him as they rasped Letitia, but he was invariably and smilingly tolerant of her. While she was sometimes unwarrantably familiar with him, even insolent, so it seemed to the girl. She even went so far, the day before the cotillion, as to put on the gown she intended to wear

and demand his opinion of it. And he gave it, accepting amiably the rôle of milliner. Though malice may have had something to do with his turning, as he immediately did, to Letitia, to ask her what she was going to wear.

"Allow me to suggest that you would look lovely in black, décolleté," he added, letting his glance rest for a moment on her beautiful shoulders and bust. He was seated as usual as close to her desk as he could get—in the back room whither he had succeeded in penetrating in the course of the week.

"Oh, *she* don't go to parties," said Mrs. Ball, before Letitia herself could think what to answer. "She'll come over, though, and see the flowers when the rooms are all arranged," was the patronising addition.

"Well, now, I call that unfair," said Philip, "to let her have all the bother and fuss and none of the fun."

"I don't dance," said Letitia proudly, noting Mrs. Ball's annoyance.

"Indeed!" said Philip, smiling rather wickedly as he noted it too. "You draw the line there, do you? Well, you wouldn't object to giving out the favours, would you?"

"Mrs. Haynes is goin' to do that," exclaimed Mrs. Ball, sharply. "She as good as asked me yesterday, and I as good as promised her."

"Not if I lead your cotillion," said Philip with unwonted decision.

Mrs. Ball looked at him keenly: "Why?"

"Do you want your most expensive favours to give out before they've gone half round?" he demanded in his turn.

Mrs. Ball's keen look grew keener: "Philip Euston, do you believe that story?"

"I said nothing about a story," was Philip's reply. "I only say that Mrs. Haynes shall not dispense the favours at your cotillion if I lead it. And I suggest Miss Berkeley for the function, because I think she would perform it more charmingly than any one else I know," whereupon he made Letitia a courtly bow.

Mrs. Ball coughed in an embarrassed way, and she made no objection when Letitia, who shared her embarrassment at the young man's persistence, rose abruptly and with a stammered, "I think you are through with me for to-day, Mrs. Ball," left the room.

But Philip Euston was persistent when the object to be gained was a gratification for himself. He approached Mrs. Ball on the same subject later on that same day at a wedding reception in lower Second Avenue. He was an intimate of this Knickerbocker mansion, she was there only on sufferance; invited, not because she was liked or wanted, but because the hostess of the occasion felt obliged to include her. But though she must be invited, she could be snubbed none the less, and she was. Philip found her standing alone in the embrasure of a window, subdued in spirit by the punishment she was receiving. He knew his world; saw what had

been done; saw his opportunity and seized it with a strategist's skill:

"I say, Mrs. Ball, let's put up a job on all these people. Let's have Miss Berkeley at your cotillion, on the ground that she is really a prospective heiress who is only playing tutor and the like *ad interim.* A cranky great-uncle let's make him, worth at least a million but mean as—as—well, as old screw Van Kliet for instance. Everybody knows that Sallie Van Kliet has to earn her clothes through the Woman's Exchange. It will be so jolly to see the way they'll take our beauty up. It's only a question of ducats with them, present or prospective, don't you know."

A flash of mighty hate and resentment shot out of Mrs. Ball's small eyes at the people before her. Yes, she did know that they all worshipped the same god she served, these delicate ladies and fine gentlemen—and that god was Mammon. But Philip's proposal frightened her too: she was feeling their hand at that moment, and it hurt.

"What'll they say when they find out it's a lie?" she demanded forcibly, "and that she's nothin' but a poor teacher without any prospects but what her good looks can buy for her?"

Philip laughed and shrugged his shoulders: "My dear Mrs. Ball, how will they find out unless we tell them? And *I* shan't. Even if they do find out, what can they say but as little as possible, since the joke will have been a give-away for them. They will swallow the pill as they have swallowed other

pills before, as quietly and gracefully as they can, each vying with the other in trying not to show that it tastes bad."

"Mrs. Ball smiled grimly: she had had to swallow some bad-tasting pills herself in the course of her social experience; the dose this afternoon had been especially bitter. And here was a chance for revenge. She looked at Philip, yieldingly:

"After all I don't believe there'll be anybody there but ourselves that knows anything about her. Mrs. Deacon Smith is the only one I know, and, though I had to invite her of course, she won't come as she isn't in the swim and don't seem to want to be."

"Wise Mrs. Deacon Smith," said Philip, affecting to be what he was not as yet, bored with the weary round himself.

"I don't believe she's got any dress," remarked Mrs. Ball.

"Buy the proper thing for her," said Philip promptly, "and send the bill to me."

Mrs. Ball looked at him almost haughtily: "Do you suppose she'd consent to anything like that?"

"Of course I didn't mean that you should tell her. Let her think it comes from you."

"And do you suppose she'd take it from me either," replied Mrs. Ball with conviction. "But she might let me lend her one of mine. Oh, it could be done. The skirt would have to be let down and taken in. But the waist," she added, more to her-

self than to him. "The waist, that would have to be made outright."

"Oh, well, that needn't be much of an undertaking," responded the young man gaily. "It mustn't be extensive, you know. Make her go in black, and, by all that's lovely, make her go décolleté."

"Will you tell me, Philip Euston," she demanded when, in reply to her final objection that she didn't think Letitia would come anyway, he declared that he was going that moment to the young lady himself, to get her consent, "will you tell me *why* you're so set to have her come?"

"I want to see her in evening dress; I want to see her neck and arms," he replied with a daring directness that sent her off laughing, the deal having been concluded at her carriage door.

CHAPTER V

FANCIES AND FEELINGS

LETITIA was sitting in her room, an open volume of Kant before her with which she was trying to resist the dreams that plagued her so persistently now, interrupting her work, submerging her higher faculties in a flood of psycho-physical sensation. Love's young dream, as the poets poetically put it. She always resisted, feeling that it was weak if not wicked to yield; and she had resisted that day, struggling hard to keep her thoughts fixed on the Critique of Pure Reason which she had chosen as about the sternest antidote to her present ill that she could find. As usual, however, resistance was vain, and she was lost so completely in her dreaming that she did not hear the servant's tap and then entrance, and it was with a start almost of fright that she came to herself to receive Philip Euston's card. A sudden wild tumult rose within her—conjecture, fear, hope, a thousand possibilities that sent the blood surging to her brain then sinking back to her heart. It was with difficulty that she could command herself sufficiently to dismiss the servant who

had lingered, curious, for such splendid young gentlemen were not every-day occurrences in this plain house full of self-supporting spinsters.

Once alone, Letitia staggered to her feet and went to her glass to smooth her hair mechanically. She was very pale and her knees trembled under her. It was some moments before she could give the touch or two that her toilet required, and descend to the parlour where the young man was waiting for her.

Mortification at this same parlour which, she thought annoyed, must seem wretchedly common and poor to him, was among the disturbing influences that made her meet him stiffly and with evident embarrassment. But his easy manner promptly freed her of this thought, and indeed the plain room seemed to take on a more prosperous air in his gay and cheerful presence. He was looking uncommonly handsome and attractive, with the air of the wedding reception still about him. Nevertheless he met with a flat refusal on stating his errand.

"Oh, now, Miss Berkeley, don't be hard-hearted," he urged, sinking down on the sofa beside her instead of into the chair she had motioned him to. "You ought really to come, in justice to those poor people whom Mrs. Ball and I have been maligning to you. Give them a chance, you know, to vindicate themselves. I know you are awfully prejudiced against them, but they're not such a bad lot after all. Most of them know how to express themselves properly,"—this in sly, laughing allusion to

poor Mrs. Ball. "Indeed, Miss Hypatia Deadstone, for instance, is quite a poetess—prints her poems in fact—at her own expense and for private circulation only," he added, with such unconscious malice that Letitia laughed aloud. Her spirits were rising as they always did in this pleasant fellow's company. But she was still obdurate to his plea.

"I don't go to parties, Mr. Euston, as Mrs. Ball very justly remarked. And I'm not sure that I should care to go to this one, even if I were 'one of 'em,' as she also remarks."

They both laughed at this, laughed gaily and looked into each other's eyes, Philip seeing in the girl's, besides their beauty and their mirth, the gleam of the pride that was opposing him. For pride it was, since, as a matter of fact, Letitia did care very much to see the scene over which this Prince Charming was to preside—because he was to preside.

Perhaps he saw that, too, in her eyes, or perhaps it was only his sanguine faith in himself that led him to add as a final argument with his delicious voice dropped to entreaty:

"But if I tell you, Miss Berkeley, that *my* pleasure depends on your being there; that I would rather have you there than all the rest of them put together; that if you don't come I shall be tempted to leave Mrs. Ball in the lurch, and come here and spend the evening with you."

"Oh, don't say that!" she exclaimed, flushed and flattered.

"But I mean it, upon my honour," he resumed. "You won't surely be so cruel as to disappoint me like that for—for an idea?"

She raised her eyes and looked into his which were gazing at her in entreaty, and something warmer. His breath on her face—he had moved close up to her on the sofa—was pleasant to her, and an inclination toward him stronger than ever came upon her.

"It would not be easy," she murmured, "to disappoint you." The next instant she had escaped his still closer approach by springing to her feet.

"Then you will come?" he exclaimed delightedly, rising too. "You will shake hands on it?" and she did not resist him as he took her hand. "Will you let me thank you so?" and bowing over it he kissed it, once—twice, with a sudden tightening of his grasp upon it. Then he drew her into his arms, in another second they would have clasped her, but her look withheld them. She did not speak, she could not; but her pallor spoke for her, and he understood. The man had grace and sweetness: he had come to linger; he longed to linger now, but instead he dropped her hand and, bowing low, he left her.

Letitia sank into a chair, nerveless, till she heard the door close upon him; then the blood rushed out to her extremities again, her strength came back, and springing to her feet she rushed up to her room. Locking the door, she stood once more before the mirror. A very different image

met her gaze from the agitated one reflected there before this interview. This one was agitated, too, but with a different agitation. Flushed, radiant, exalted, she caught the mirror's frame with passionate grasp and pressed a hot kiss on her own reflected lips. But, alas, the contact was cold! and with a shiver she sank into a chair, burying her face in her hands.

"What ails you, Letitia Berkeley? Are you mad? Do you know what you are doing? Oh, but I will get beyond them once, these narrow limits!" and she sprang up to pace her room with eager steps. "Away from *you!*" stopping to apostrophise her books, as if they, silent, patient companions, had disapproved. "I will have one glimpse into his world of light, and gaiety, and ease, and—and *love!*" Again she hid her face, to recall the more vividly the expression in Philip's as he kissed her hand, as he would have—Ah!

The next morning she offered no objection when Mrs. Ball showed her the beautiful black lace dress she had selected for her to wear, though she felt ashamed of herself for being willing to appear in borrowed finery. She did protest, however, when Mrs. Ball's maid fitted on the low-cut bodice that was being hastily prepared.

"Oh, not so low, please!" she cried to Mrs. Ball, who was superintending the operation. "I don't want to be like that young lady, you know."

"Your backbone's all right," said Mrs. Ball,

chuckling maliciously at the reminder. "That's the kind of a neck for a woman to have," she added, looking admiringly at the girl's fine bust, "white, and round, and firm, like that marble Venus's of mine downstairs."

"Oh, but I couldn't expose mine as she does," replied the girl, reddening at the same time with shame at her jest, which sounded coarse in her ears.

"There's many of 'em wouldn't hesitate," said Mrs. Ball, who had her opinion, as has been seen, of the society she toadied so assiduously. "But you're right, my girl, there *is* a place for a woman's waist to begin, and I don't want yours to begin a hair's-breadth below it."

Mrs. Ball was quite reconciled now to Philip's scheme, but she carefully avoided any hint of it to Letitia, feeling instinctively that the latter would not regard it as the good joke she and Philip thought it. A new idea had come to her in regard to these two young people, an idea that made her mutter exultingly more than once that day:

"That would fix Madam Euston, I guess! Wouldn't she kick, though? A poor nobody for her Philip!" She began really to like Letitia, who passed the whole day with her, assisting her in many ways.

"It's a great pity," she said kindly, when Letitia came into her bedroom, dressed for the evening and looking very handsome.—She herself was gorgeous in purple velvet, point lace, and blazing diamonds,—

"It's a great pity that you ain't in the position your looks and manners entitle you to."

"I am not ashamed of my position," said Letitia haughtily.

"That ain't any reason for not wantin' to better it, is it?" demanded Mrs. Ball with her brusque directness. "I tell you, Letitia Berkeley, it's just as natural for a woman to want to rise as for a man, and the higher she can get the better she's satisfied. *I* know, I guess." She spoke triumphantly, drawing herself up with the dignity of conscious success. "And if you haven't got the same ambition, why there's somethin' wrong with you, that's all. Take my advice, make a strike for a swell husband. You'll find it pleasanter patronisin' than bein' patronised, and a good deal easier bein' supported than supportin' yourself. It ain't love that a woman ought to think of first, it's gettin' herself well-placed."

"I think that's horribly base and venal," murmured the girl, whose thoughts were full of the passionate potentialities of love, not of its pecuniary possibilities.

"And do you suppose the men ain't base and venal, as you call it, too?" cried Mrs. Ball in that hard, worldly tone of hers. "There's only two things they ever want of a woman, money or her body, and the cheaper they can get whichever it is they want of her the better they're satisfied. What the woman ought to do is to make 'em pay high every time."

And so saying Mrs. Ball swept her long velvet train out of the room, leaving Letitia with a very bad taste in her mouth for her first feast of fashion.

CHAPTER VI

THE DARKNESS IS MADE LIGHT

"OH, they'll come stragglin' in 'bout 'leven," said Mrs. Ball in reply to a remark of Letitia, as ten o'clock found them still alone in the big, brilliantly-lighted, flower-decked rooms. "Invite 'em at nine and they'll come at 'leven, invite 'em at 'leven and they'll come at one. They're always in a fuss gettin' up their parties, and then they put off goin' to 'em till the last minute, as if they didn't care a pin about 'em after all. And what's more, they don't stay when they once get there, wantin' to be off to another, packin' in two or three in a night when they've started too late to enjoy one properly. It wasn't so up in Vermont, where I come from. We always went at the time we were invited, and we stayed as long as we could without wearin' out our welcome."

"Do *you* enjoy it?" asked Letitia.

"*Enjoy!*" echoed Mrs. Ball with a short cynical laugh. "Of course I don't enjoy it, any more than they do. That ain't what I do it for. Ten years ago when I first set out to get into their swim, as

they call it, I thought mebbe I should, but I soon learned better. I had set out to get in though, and I was bound to do it, cost what it might. And it *has* cost, but I'm *there*," and she chuckled triumphantly. "You saw my lists, you know who's comin' here to-night. Well, I've *bought* their acquaintance, nearly every one of 'em, at their own price. They'll all sell themselves for one thing or another. The poor ones 'll often take the cold cash, and the rich ones 'll let you spend for 'em. I've subscribed thousands for their charities—they most of 'em have a pet charity that helps fill up their idle time and make 'em important. My purse is always in my hand for their schemes. They've made me pay high for the honour as they think it is,—*honour*, humph?—of knowin' 'em, but *I've* taken care it should be for value received."

She paused and looked round at her sumptuous rooms till her glance finally wandered to the portrait of a handsome, middle-aged man which hung on the opposite wall.

"I did it for *him* first," she continued. "I wasn't a-goin' to have the wives of the men he had dealin's with in Wall Street invitin' him, and leavin' *me* out, as they did at first. They were willin' enough to have him to their dinners and their parties, because he was a man, and han'some. But they didn't want me, *I* wasn't like 'em. Of course I wasn't like them. *I* began life farther down the ladder than you are, Letitia Berkeley. I was a blacksmith's daughter, and I had to work with these two hands"

—she held them out in their fine white kids as she spoke. "I had to work from the time I could walk But it didn't hurt me. I had a nice complexion, and a nice figger. It was my bust and red cheeks got me John Ball."

Letitia looked at the bust spread out of all proportion now beneath the purple velvet and point lace that decked it; looked at the red cheeks spread into an apoplectic flush that suffused the whole fat face; then looked at John Ball's portrait more closely than she had yet observed it—looked and started: of whom did it remind her? It was a finer face than his relict's; with a certain distinction of feature along with its masculine force and vigour.

"It was a good ketch for me," Mrs. Ball was meantime proceeding. "His father kept the general store, and after he died John an' I took the biz'ness and made it boom. The Somerville store was the best in the county. I *did* enjoy that, and I ran the store altogether after he took to politics. Then he put the railroad through, made a pile of money by the deal, and of course runnin' a country store wasn't goin' to satisfy him after that. Before I could realise it, we had sold out the Somerville biz'ness, and were here in New York, and he was down in Wall Street, pilin' up money hand over fist. I enjoyed that too, for I was ambitious and I liked to see him gettin' on, and to think where our boy would be—that's him there next his father. But we hadn't more'n got into this house when he died —the only child I ever had!"

She paused, and Letitia, looking from the lad's pictured face which so resembled her, to hers, saw it convulsed by a strong emotion. The usually hard woman had to get up and move about the room before she could recover her self-command. Then she sat down again by Letitia and continued :—

"A few years more and he went too, before his work was done. He'd have been richer than the richest of 'em if he'd lived—he was a born financier. If I could have done what I wanted to, I'd have finished the job for him. 'A hundred millions,' he used to say to me, 'a hundred millions, Polly, then we'll stop.'—I was capable to do it as I did the store ; he said so himself. But Wall Street wasn't Somerville ; bein' a *woman*, there wasn't any place down there on 'Change for me. The most I could do was to deal through others, and that's like havin' to holler through an ear-trumpet when you want to whisper. No, bein' a woman, I must be satisfied with *this*," and she indicated her festal attire and festal rooms with a gesture of contempt.

It made Letitia feel like asking the strong hard woman's pardon for much that she had thought of her. What she did, however, was to look mutely away from her, back at the portraits on the wall ; at the husband's especially : *whom* that she had seen did he resemble ?

Mrs. Ball watched her as if she knew her thought, a strange mixture of suspense, resentment, and expectation on her ruddy face.

And finally what she was waiting for came ;

Letitia's brow cleared: "Why, of course," she exclaimed. "It's Mr. Euston."

"I thought you'd find it," said Mrs. Ball with one of her short, mirthless laughs. "You ain't the first to see it, either. One of 'em was good enough to explain it too. She said it must be 'a sectional resemblance, don't you know; something—ah—er—climatic; Yes, climatic,'"—and she mimicked to perfection the affected drawl and insulting air of the snob who had got this off. "We come from the same place, you know," she added with a curious look. "Philip Euston was born in Somerville."

Letitia did not know, and the news in part explained for her the familiarity of Mrs. Ball's manner to the young man, which had more than once amazed her: coming from the same small place there was naturally a sort of neighbourhood intimacy between them.

"A *sectional* resemblance," Mrs. Ball was repeating. "*Climatic!* Good Lord!" and she laughed aloud.

Just then there was a stir in the hall, steps on the tessellated floor announced an arrival, and Letitia, knowing instinctively who it was, sprang to her feet and fled from the room in sudden confusion. But she did not flee far, and presently she heard Philip's pleasant voice in chat with their hostess. Then a pause and his step again; and then he had found her.

"Now wasn't I right about what you should wear?" he exclaimed, admiringly, as he approached

her, looking his best himself in his faultless evening suit and most charming Prince Charming manner. —And how he did resemble Mrs. Ball's husband, to be sure! strikingly!—the eyes, the conformation of the face, the quality and colour of the hair, and the way it grew—quite remarkable. Letitia, as she noted it wondered if he was aware of it himself, and if that was the explanation of his gay and good-humoured civility to Mrs. Ball. There was sweetness enough in his nature to make him accept the accident amiably, though his snobbish set did resent it.

To her he was adding: "I always know what a woman I like would look well in."

"*A* not *the* woman he likes?" she thought resentfully. She knew it well enough: from his manner which bespoke much practice; from Mrs. Ball too, who had told her of the several fashionable girls whom he had disappointed by not pushing his attentions to the nuptial stage.

"He always has a walk-over, every time," Mrs. Ball had said. "They can't resist that way of his. Nor it ain't only ladies he confines himself to, neither," she had added on one occasion, darkly hinting.

Letitia thought of all this now, and Philip, noting the shadow on her face though he did not guess its cause, set himself to chasing it away, and soon, as usual, smiling lips and eyes were his reward.

There was never any body in his talk; nothing strong, suggestive, or witty. Half the time Letitia could not remember afterwards what he had said;

but his easy bonhomie and personal charms cast the same glamour over her that makes men so often endure and adore enchanting nothingness. To-night she felt this personal charm of his particularly, and he in his turn was particularly expressive too, bending over her with a new eagerness in his glance, and a note of deeper, intenser feeling in his enticing tones.

Mrs. Ball, taking up her position to receive her guests, looked through into the back room where the young couple stood; saw the girl's flushed, happy, upturned face, the man's enamoured attitude, and a flash of triumph flamed in her small eyes.

"I wish his proud mother could see that?" she muttered between her teeth half aloud. "By God! I never thought my turn would come *that* way!" and she glanced up once more at the portrait of her husband which hung in the place of honour on her walls. Then again came an arrival to turn the current of her thoughts.

Popular Philip had to divide his attentions that evening, of course, but Letitia was uppermost in his mind and he let her see it. He was generous too: he introduced any number of other men to her and not a few ladies, and as he had taken care to whisper to Dicky Smalley that here was an heiress, everybody even of the ladies was most polite. Dicky himself was assiduous, to Letitia's great disgust for she had taken an intense dislike to his diluted blond colouring, mean, thin-lipped, beardless mouth, and affected, pseudo-English accent.

"I was down at Hempstead to-day," he remarked by way of making an impression. "Riding 'cross country after the hounds."

"Indeed," she replied with a disrespectful smile. "It must be rather a farce, isn't it? on tame little cultivated Long Island."

"Oh, but it isn't a farce, I assure you," he returned indignantly. "It's very serious business. Pink coats and all the rest of it, yer know. To be sure we do have the deuce of a time finding anything to hunt, but it's jolly fun riding after the pack. Gives one a splendid appetite for dinner. And that's about all life amounts to, yer know," he added languidly, "getting up an appetite for dinner."

"I should think you would find it an intolerable burden then!" flashed out the girl.

"What, the appetite?" demanded Dicky, in all earnest.

"No, the life you can't find better use for," she answered indignantly, thinking how hard she and most others had to work for bare necessities. "Why don't you get up your appetite doing something useful?"

"Useful?" echoed Dicky, disgusted in his turn. "I don't belong to the working class." Then, recollecting that he was talking to an heiress, he added defensively: "Doncher see, Miss Berkeley, that my not doing anything because I don't have to, gives some other feller, who does have to, just so much more of a chance."

Letitia wanted to tell him that his competition

was not likely to interfere with anybody; wanted to tell him that she despised him and his whole silly set—with one exception. But just then the exception came to claim her. The cotillion was about to begin, and Philip wished to escort her to the ball-room, and to her seat at the table whereon were outspread the beautiful and costly favours. Gold matchboxes and gold bangles, jewelled scarf and lace pins, bonbonnières and bouquets. Mrs. Ball had spared no expense in doing what she, too, despised.

But Letitia soon wearied of giving out the pretty toys, and leaned back in her corner, leaving to her companion at the table, a sweet-faced and well-bred married woman, the burden of the function. Nor would she respond to the advances of a jolly, elderly man who had asked to be presented and was trying to ingratiate himself. She was in no mood for conversation; her intellect was lulled to sleep, her senses all astir in response to the sensuous influences of the scene which smote her newness to them with their full effect. The all-pervading light and odour of flowers commingled with the perfumes wafted from the women's clothes; the gleam of their jewels and naked shoulders; the masculinity of the men; and through it all the thrill of the dance music, ebbing and flowing in her ears, now soft and dreamy,—love sinking into love's gentle arms; now urgent, commanding,—passion sweeping resistless to its will.

And the king of this scene, Philip Euston, was meeting her glance from afar with a daring eloquence

in his, and approaching her at every opportunity to murmur some assurance of what she could not fail to see. Others saw it too. Despite all his tact and experience handsome Philip betrayed himself, as man, astute, imperial man, when he's enamoured, is so very apt to do. And the dowagers against the wall had something new to talk about, and the men exchanged knowing glances, and the young ladies who were not too absorbed in flirtations of their own observed and noted.

Dicky Smalley added it to the grievance he already felt he had against Letitia for the snub she had given him anent the hunting. During supper he approached her with a bottle of champagne and a glass, but she declined the proffered beverage with a scornful glance at the boozy flush on his silly, canary-bird face.

"Oh, you're a teeto too, are you?" he chirped in his small thickened voice, which accusation she neither affirmed nor denied as she measured him with wide disdainful eyes that for the moment quite abashed him. Then, recovering himself with a malignant flash, he cried out so all about could hear him:

"Perhaps you'd like some lemonade, and here's Euston,"—catching sight over her shoulder of that young gentleman—"to bring it to you. He's a *filip* you evidently don't object to, though you are a teeto too, haw, haw, haw!" and he walked off with a mean laugh of satisfied spite at the deep, conscious blush he had called up into her proud face.

"Smalley's name is a perfect fit," said Philip, loud enough too for others to hear and join in the laugh of contempt that turned the tables. "He's a nasty little chump," he added in a tone for Letitia's ear only. "Don't mind him. He isn't worth even your contempt, most lovely ladye!"

Pretty ways had Prince Charming; sweet ways too! Letitia felt her ruffled feathers subsiding; felt that she could forgive all his world, even Dicky Smalley, for his sake.

But he could not be always at her side, and presently she had wearied of the supper as she had of dispensing the favours, and slipping away, she went in quest of a quiet corner.

The upper stories were deserted, even the servants on duty in the cloak-rooms had slipped off downstairs for their share of the feast.

In Mrs. Ball's boudoir the lights were low, and thither Letitia bent her steps, not seeing till she was on the threshold that it was occupied. A tall, magnificent blonde whom she had already remarked for her voluptuous dancing and immodest dress, was lolling back in an easy-chair, smoking a cigarette; and leaning over her, smoking too, was Philip Euston.

Letitia did not see that the look he was bending on the blonde's unblushing expanse of naked white flesh was about what he would have given a prize pig at a cattle show; she only saw that he was there —there where they had met—in seeming devotion to another woman, and a tremendous wave of anger

and jealousy swept over her. She turned and fled, nearly upsetting Dicky Smalley who was coming toward the boudoir with more champagne and more glasses in his hands. She did not stop to apologise or to note the impudent and curious glance he shot after her as she swept on to the one refuge she was sure of—the back room in which her secretary's work was done.

It was cool there and dark save for the moonlight that shone tranquilly in through the window, and she dropped down into the chair by her desk, battling with her passion, whose real meaning she now fully recognised.

Swift, pursuing steps in the hallway without startled her to her feet, and Philip Euston was with her in the moonlit room.

"Why did you run away so just now?" he demanded.

She did not answer at once; could not speak for the revulsion within her from anger and jealousy to a joy that was almost fear at his coming; and he repeated his question, seizing her hands imperiously and drawing her forward where the moonlight could shine full upon them both.

"I did not wish to interrupt your tête-à-tête," she replied coldly, trying to shake off his hold as the vision of the insolent blonde rose before her.

"My tête-à-tête!" he exclaimed with a short laugh. "Good God! I was only trying to keep that girl, who's a cousin of mine, from letting Dicky Smalley get her drunk. She drinks like a fish.—

Letitia," he added softly, after a moment, during which he had watched her expression relax and warm, his own waxing ardent. "Letitia!"

Her anger was gone; her will after it; consciousness itself seemed about to follow as he clasped her in his arms and laid his lips on hers.

The music recommencing below, roused them finally from their embrace.

"To think I must leave you!" he sighed. "Leave this," and he held her off with his hands on her waist and gazed at her in passionate admiration—at the flush he had kissed into her cheeks, and the grand white grace of her shoulders gleaming fair and enticing above the filmy blackness of her gown. "Leave this?" he repeated, "for that stupid dance!" And again he drew her close.

She did not follow him back to the garish scene below, going instead directly to the third-story room she was to occupy, for it had been arranged that she was to sleep that night, or rather morning, at Mrs. Ball's. She wanted to be alone, since she could not be alone with him; wanted to live over again that half hour of ecstasy; wanted to sing, to laugh, to weep, to lean far out of the window with glowing bosom indifferent to the night's wintry cold, and call the moon and the stars to witness that love at last was hers.

CHAPTER VII

THE GAMUT OF PASSION

Two weeks ensued, two weeks broken in upon by Christmas and New Year's, which Letitia failed for the first time in her life to pass with her father. She could not bring herself to leave New York, or rather Philip Euston, for New York, in fact the whole universe, was shrunk for her now to his microcosm. She was in no mood to return just then to the small, dull college town where her father lived; to her father, who, far beyond the emotional stage himself if he had ever experienced it, would ask her searching questions as to her mental condition and progress. The latter was almost null; she blushed as she confessed this to herself, she would have sunk with shame to have had to confess it to him, especially since the sole excuse she could offer for her present state of mind might entail a betrayal of that which she was most anxious to conceal. Her father's question about Philip Euston would be so direct: Are you going to marry him? And that was a question she had not yet answered for herself, nor had Philip asked her. So she soothed her conscience, which accused her of a neglect of duty in

leaving the old father alone at this holiday time, by sending him a box of gifts, denying herself a new hat in order to get them.

Then she went sleigh-riding Christmas afternoon, way up into Westchester County, with Philip Euston, and they dined together that evening at a fine restaurant, Philip securing a private room for the purpose.

This was all very irregular from a conventional point of view, Letitia knew that well enough, but it was very delightful too, gliding swiftly over the snow in Philip's handsome sleigh, with his handsome self beside her; and the little dinner afterwards was very cosy. Too cosy, she thought at first, smitten with a sudden fear at finding herself so alone with her lover, and she bade him somewhat brusquely keep his distance when he would have embraced her. He obeyed her so meekly, however, looking so submissive and so attractive withal, that she speedily felt compunctious, and as soon as the waiter's absence from the room between courses permitted of such a demonstration, she rose and went around to him and kissed him of her own accord.

Every day or evening of the next week they went somewhere together. They were both skilful skaters and the ice just then was fine. There were the theatres too, a new experience to this country girl, on whose fresh senses the plays she saw made their full impression; adaptations from the French, adaptations from the German, immorality or sickly sentiment. Nothing American, nothing strong or

original to appeal to the intellect, and rouse it to healthy activity. All was emotional, sensual, as if the whole world were employed solely with the sexual passion and not even with the highest form of that, which but intensified her state, giving her a sub-conscious sense of being justified in her own preoccupation with it. A result most advantageous to Philip, though, to his credit be it said, such was not his motive in taking her to the theatre. Blasé play-goer though he was, his interest in the drama went no deeper than the shape of a ballet girl's legs or the fit of an actor's clothes, and these æsthetic pleasures were untroubled by any considerations as to possible moral or emotional effects.

New Year's Day was a repetition of Christmas. The next day Letitia resumed work with Mrs. Ball after a vacation of two weeks.

Mrs. Ball's manner underwent a peculiar change that morning. When Letitia arrived it was eager, expectant. The cordiality that had almost warmed into affection on the night of the cotillion was still there, though more remote—on waiting orders as it were. But as the morning wore on she grew angry and impatient, the two vertical lines between her eyes deepening to a scowl. At last she demanded abruptly:

"Have you been seein' much of Philip Euston?"

Letitia looked up with a blush that answered for her.

"Yesterday too, I s'pose?" continued Mrs Ball, eyeing her keenly. "I was down at Tuxedo yester-

day, and they were madder than March hares because he didn't come down to run things for 'em. The german last night was a regular fizzle." She said this as if it rather pleased her and there was an approach to friendly confidence in her tone. But though a sense of triumph swelled Letitia's heart, she made no reply, and again Mrs. Ball's face darkened.

"Dicky Smalley's been tellin' all over," she broke out again presently, "that he saw you slip out here into this room the night of my party, and Philip Euston after you."

Still Letitia did not answer though she was hot all over with embarrassment; but she would not speak, would not confirm or deny, so long as Mrs. Ball maintained that determined, inquisitorial air. She began indeed to feel as ugly as Mrs. Ball evidently did.

The fact was, things had not been very pleasant for Mrs. Ball either at Tuxedo yesterday. She had been invited down by her hostess of the occasion for the sole purpose of being "pumped" as to this new heiress who had monopolised Philip Euston at her cotillion, and who was apparently monopolising him still as he had failed to put in an appearance at anything since. She had been obliged to "stick to the lie,"—as she afterwards expressed it,—that Philip had thrust upon her, though she felt all the time as if she were tying a noose for her own neck when once the truth was known. And that might happen so easily, she shuddered to think how easily!

wondering at her own temerity in letting herself be drawn into playing such a hazardous trick. And Philip, who had misled her into it, who had really done it, was keeping out of her way—had even made the call that politeness required of him after her cotillion at a time when he knew she would not be at home. She was all at sea as to his intentions, as to how far he proposed to carry the matter. She had hoped for some light from Letitia, but the girl was if anything more exasperating than the man, for here she was before her, in her hire, and consequently in her power to a certain extent, yet keeping her at bay by a fine reserve and a latent hauteur that awed her in spite of herself. Resentment and nascent suspicion marked her manner when Letitia, still proudly reticent, took her leave.

CHAPTER VIII

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

ONE cold, clear January night, Letitia betook herself to the Metropolitan Opera-house for her first hearing of German opera. She had had a misunderstanding with Philip that afternoon when he met her, as was now his regular custom, after her last lesson, and they had gone for a walk in the winter dusk—up Lexington Avenue at his suggestion. It was such a nuisance, he had said, to have to be interrupted every other step lifting one's hat as was the case if one stayed in Fifth Avenue. He probably had meant this and no more than this, but Letitia, rendered supersensitive by a little occurrence at Mrs. Ball's that morning, chose to discover in it an objection to being seen by his fashionable friends walking with her, a poor teacher. The thought made her manner to him colder than the winter air that brought such a beautiful colour into her smooth cheeks, and Philip, aware that he was being punished, but not knowing what for, tried in vain to thaw it. He did not even succeed so far as to get permission to come as usual that evening. She had something to do, she had said in reply to his request, some

German to write. This with a mean little sense of superiority, for the language was dead letter to him.

But instead of German she decided after dinner, for which she had no appetite, to seek distraction from herself by going to the opera. She took a cheap seat up in the topmost gallery, far above the tiers of boxes where Mrs. Ball and the set she had bought her way into spread themselves out to be seen. But she paid a speculator his extra price for a seat in the front row that she might see them too; see in a bird's-eye view the splendour she had touched and savoured at the rich woman's cotillion; though her principal object was that main one with her now, Philip Euston. He would probably be there since he could not be with her. "Sweet the triumph" of the thought that she could hold him back or send him thither—sway him to her will, she the obscure, but the adored, but the adored! What sweet things he could say, and say them sweetly too! This time last night, for instance, in Central Park—Ah, what evening strolls they were, in that convenient solitude spread through the city's heart, its daytime, bourgeois spick and spanness lost in the grandeur of the night!—

But the boxes were still unoccupied when the overture began, and Letitia forgot all about them, forgot even that Philip might enter any one of them, as the glorious strains of the Tannhäuser music thrilled divinely through the air. "Sighing like a god in pain," she thought, "a god in pain with love's delicious agony."

An amateur of music, not a musician herself, it had a general rather than a particular effect upon her. It did not hold her attention to its harmonic structure, but loosed it rather, setting her emotions and imagination free. Motionless she sat, her eyes fixed on the stage, her ears entranced with melody, but all was motion within her, a sub-current of rapid and varied feelings and fancies sweeping through her brain: remorse, as she thought of her father, solitary in his old age. But impossible for her, impossible as ice with fire! She ought to have gone to him, however, for these holidays just past, the first she had failed to spend with him. He would have it now against her as part and parcel of this coming to New York that he had so opposed. Was he right after all? Was it a mistake? a wrong to herself? to the high ideal of culture and usefulness that he had set for her, that she had set for herself as the aim of life. Ah, that the physical part of one's nature should have strength to lead the higher part astray! And yet, did not one owe something to that part of one's nature too? Ought it to be starved completely, and only the other, the intellect, nourished and fed? Nay; the emotions, the passions had their rights too.

And these presently were bearing her away on the wings of roseate dreams.

She came to herself with a start as the music left her poised high in air. The first act was over, and the grand tier was filled. In one of its boxes sat Philip Euston's big blond cousin, "stripped down

to it," as he had said. With her, two elderly ladies, countenancing the shameless display. And—no—yes, Philip himself standing behind them! But looking straight up at her! Straight into her heart, it seemed to her, to see the great throb that it gave at sight of him. He made a motion with his glass, but she would not see it, would not see him, sinking back in her seat out of range. She had not counted on this: she had only thought of seeing, not of being seen up there at that impecunious height. How long had he been there? How had he found her out, among all those hundreds of others?

"Do you think you could be in range of my eyes and not be found out?" said Philip, when as quickly as he could get up there he was at her side, walking with her in the bare, ugly corridor. "So this is the German you had to write," he added accusingly, but amiably.

He was a sweet fellow, thought the girl. Any other man would have been resentful, and have left her to herself up there in her loft. "Being a woman I thought I might change my mind," she replied, amiably too.

"I'm so glad you did," he returned, "for now I can take you home. "We'll have a jolly little supper somewhere, and then a jolly go-as-you-please walk home, under the stars, as you say. Glorious night, isn't it?" He was a nice, breezy, out-of-doors, cold bather, was Philip; as warm-blooded and vigorous as Letitia herself. That indeed was the bond between them.

"What will you do with your friends in the box?" she asked in the next intermission, when he had returned again to her side and to the subject of their meeting after the opera. She asked the question out of pure triumph, triumph over them, those be-diamonded dames in the grand tier. They would have to make way for her with him. He was hers, not theirs. Hers!—

"My aunt and cousin?" answered Philip with his careless laugh. "Pack them off in their stuffy old carriage—before the act is over, if I can."

And this he did. Letitia saw them rise and depart in the face of Tannhäuser's tragic *Heimkehr*. When the opera was over he was waiting for her at the gallery exit.

"Would you believe it?" he exclaimed. "There is the worst storm on outside you ever saw—a regular blizzard!"

The fine weather of the early evening had changed indeed, and one of the wildest of western storms was sweeping through the city streets with the fury of an ice-hell broken bounds. Snow, and a terrific wind that tore the falling flakes into their component crystals, and drove them cutting against the face like fine lancets.

To get a cab was impossible. The first departures had seized on these at any price. And the cars stood blocked in a long line up and down Broadway, unable to move in either direction.

"There's nothing for it but to walk," said Philip, pulling his fur collar up about his ears. "I wish

you were more warmly clad." Letitia's short black jacket looked to him thinner even than it was, compared to his own luxurious fur-lined coat.

Arm-in-arm they started out, but almost immediately had to stop to let a carriage, rolling away from the box exit, pass them. Its two occupants were leaning forward, looking out at the struggling pedestrians, and as the faces of Philip and his companion confronted them, unmistakable in the brilliant light, there was recognition on both sides.

"Mrs. Ball and Dicky Smalley!" exclaimed Philip in an annoyed tone, and Letitia, too, felt annoyed at the encounter as she thought of the inquisition that would inevitably ensue the next day.

She lived up and westward. To reach her house they must face the full fury of the gale. They struggled on a block or two, bent almost double against the wind. Then, exhausted, they took refuge in a doorway.

"I'm afraid we can't do it," said Philip when he had recovered breath. "And if we stay here we shall freeze. Suppose we go down town? The wind will help us along, and we may finally succeed in getting a cab."

She assented, and away they went before the wind, more sailing than walking over the icy streets which grew more and more deserted the farther they left the opera-house behind them. Occasionally a cab would pass, but Philip hailed in vain: all were taken.

"We may have to sail on like this to the Battery,"

he laughed at length, at the top of his lungs, yet scarcely audible above the tumult of the storm.

And Letitia laughed back as loudly, with a reckless and vigorous young pleasure that dared the elemental fury and turned it into sport.

From going arm-in-arm they were going hand-in-hand, now torn apart till their hands ached with holding on ; now flung together so that even if they had not wished it they must have clasped each other close.

It was the tempest too, that finally swept them, with a sudden redoubled blast, around the corner of a side street and so into partial shelter.

" My street," shouted Philip. " There's my apartment. Let's go into it and wait till things have subsided a little, and I can get you home. Come," he urged, and she went.

In the warm bright hall to which his key admitted them they paused, Letitia dazed by the suddenness of the transition from the wild violence of the storm to warmth and peace. Philip's voice, dropped to its ordinary suave tones again, sounded muffled and remote in her beaten ears.

" I had made up my mind to take you into a hotel," he was saying. " But this is better and ever so much jollier, isn't it? "

She did not reply and he went over to the elevator. It was there, but unattended, and the gate was closed. " I'll bet that little devil has skipped for home," said Philip aloud, but to himself. " Well, no matter," he added, returning to her side.

"It's the fifth floor, but with your wind you won't mind that. Come," he concluded gently yet authoritatively, and she let him take her hand and with the other arm about her lead her up through the silent, seemingly-deserted house.

In his bachelor sitting-room an open fire was shedding its delightful welcome from the hearth, and a soft flood of veiled electric light filled the room. As they entered his valet appeared from somewhere, ready to help them off with their things.

"Brush the snow off them and put them where I can find them. Then you may go," said the master. "I shan't want anything more of you to-night."

"*Bien, monsieur,*" said the man and disappeared.

"I am going to brew you a punch," said Philip to his guest, following her to the hearth whither she had turned. Rolling up a big easy-chair, he made her sit down in it and put a footstool under her feet. "No? A glass of wine then? I am so afraid you will take cold. You are so cold!" he added, taking her hands in his and chafing them.

But of wine she would have none either, whereupon her hospitable entertainer changed his tone:—

"Very well then, you shall drink some hot coffee. I can make that too, right here. Meantime, if you'll allow me, I'll take a whiff of cognac myself."

He crossed the room as he spoke, and opened the door of a richly-carved Flemish buffet, from which he produced besides the cognac, a pâté de foie gras and some biscuits. A Vienna coffee-pot in shining

brass stood on the shelf, and conveniently at hand were all the accessories of an impromptu repast. Handsome Philip, practised to elegance in this rôle too, proceeded with his arrangements in tactful silence, leaving his guest to the gracious entertainment of his glowing hearth. The heavy draperies before the windows were drawn tight, shutting them out, shutting the storm-torn world out, and this one warm rich bit of it securely in.

A luxurious sense of seclusion, of comfort, of repose, wrapped Letitia about; relaxed, subdued her. She closed her eyes, she would have liked to sleep; sleep away the fatigue, the turmoil, the fear and the desire, the "I would" and the "Nay, I must not," of these tumultuous days. She did sleep: long enough to dream that the climax to them had come, with Philip laying masterful hands upon her. With a cry she sprang to her feet to escape him, and to face his reflection in the mirror over the mantel which revealed him innocently remote, but pausing, startled by her outcry, to look over at her by the same roundabout way.

"I fell asleep and dreamed," she answered briefly to his glance, still with her back turned to him.

"Oh, ho, nightmare! I don't wonder, after riding the blast as you did to-night,—like a Valkyr," and Philip's pleasant laugh floated over to her ears, blithesome and reassuring, while Philip himself resumed his hospitable preparations, leaving her to speak again or not as she might choose.

And Letitia did not speak, at first because she was

ashamed of herself for doing even in a dream this gallant fellow wrong. Then from watching him her attention strayed to the rest of the scene which the mirror presented to her view. Much of the room was reflected there, a vision of rich and perfect beauty in its kind. Here was luxury! Here was ease! Here the taste and culture that the poor man or woman, though they were wise as Solomon, could never know. Ah, there was something in wealth after all, the golden opportunity! For such as Mrs. Ball, power. For those like this man here, to make the act of living a picturesque and splendid fête.—With all its beauty, however, a bachelor apartment this. That picture yonder on the wall—but no; *she* was the one who was out of place, she, the living, throbbing woman in this man's room—in his!

"I am going!" she exclaimed, wheeling suddenly around upon him.

"Going?" he repeated in surprise, stopping what he was doing to approach her. "Why you have only just come. The coffee even isn't done."

"I don't want any coffee. I don't want anything to eat or drink. I want to go home," she replied, but the next moment she was laughing at herself in concert with Philip's merry peal.

"You said that just like a little girl, Letitia," he exclaimed. "And little girls must be obedient, you know. So when I tell you that you are not going home now; that you are not going out again into this dreadful night; that you are to stay here and let

me take care of you till morning, you are to obey, do you understand? and not pout."

For all its gaiety the man's tone was firm with a decision that made his jesting a command, and the girl submitted, with a strange and terrible joy in her own surrender. She looked up at him—tall as she was, he stood above her—looked up at him, and he, smiling, stooped and kissed her on the brow, as one rewards submission in a child.

But the ardour of a lover was behind his self-control, trembled in his lips, and sent his arms reaching out to clasp her, and she retreated before it, embarrassed, frightened, yet responsive to its thrill.

"Why didn't you tell me how I look?" she stammered, over by the hearth again and looking into the mirror; at herself this time wreathed in the stormy masses of her hair which the wind had torn from its pins and flung about her face and down her back in luxuriant disorder.

"I didn't want to," he replied. "I've been revelling in it. As for how you look," he added ardently, going over to stand close beside her and to gaze into the mirror at her. "You know how I think you always look, and never lovelier than to-night with your hair down that way—like the Valkyr you are. What a glorious chevelure!" Frankly the lover now, he would have touched it, would have touched her, but again she retreated, shrinking from him in pale entreaty. And once more he forced his passion back, turning from her with a deprecating gesture to throw open his bedroom door,

and to tell her in quiet if troubled tones where, within, she would find combs and brushes. Then he left her to enter it alone and went back to his lunch table.

When she reappeared, combed and brushed into proper order, the coffee was ready, its fragrant aroma filling the room. But they scarcely sipped it after all, and the pâté remained untouched. And the silence between them was like the catching of a breath.

Ready Philip was fairly abashed by the suddenness of his opportunity. It was his opportunity, however, and—

But no. Let us leave them to themselves and come away.

CHAPTER IX

AFTERMATH

NOT till late the next afternoon did Letitia return to her own quarters. She had sent a note in the morning to quiet her landlady with the assurance that she had found shelter with a friend over night. Philip would fain have continued that shelter through the day, for though the wind had blown itself out, the snow was still falling and traffic was suspended to an extent that would excuse any failure to keep engagements. But Letitia was firm on this point. Her day's work, that day's work must be done, no matter what the difficulties. Indeed these were welcome, for they gave her the distraction from herself that she needed to carry her through her round. She gave out, however, before the last hour, excusing herself by messages to her pupil and to Philip, who was to meet her, as usual, after it. He it was before whom her spirit thus fainted at last; from him it was that she fled to the seclusion of her own room. She must be alone before meeting him again; there was a self-examination to be made, a verdict to be spoken by herself

over herself—as imperative a necessity to her class of mind as confession and absolution or penance to a good Roman Catholic.

It had been a trying day, beginning with Mrs. Ball's inquisitive insistence as to the details of her getting home the previous night, which had forced her to prevaricate—always a difficult thing for her to do—to save herself. Then her own pulsating thoughts and emotions which had rendered doubly tiresome her tiresome routine. Her father's figure had haunted her all day: a stern image of religio-ethical severity, and his warning, vividly remembered from that stormy interview with him, rang through her brain:

"See to it that you do not add unto that—*sin!*"

So he would regard it, and the proud girl shivered and shrank as she thought of the terms he would apply to her:—harlot, a fallen woman!

"But have I sinned?" she asked herself critically. "Is not sin the wronging another or myself? And whom have I wronged? Certainly not Philip Euston—society itself would acquit me there. Myself, then? How? Why should I be tortured by this feeling of having done something I ought not to have done? Why ought I not to have done it? Whose law have I broken in obeying the strongest impulse I have ever known? Whose law but society's, which says to the man: "Indulge your passions if you must, develop yourself on that side too if you will;" but to the woman: "Out of

marriage you must not even know what passion is. You must crush down your own nature or we will crush you." That is the fiat I have set at naught. And why does society insist so upon this? On moral grounds? But morality is alike binding on the man, or should be. Ethics has no sex—no more than philosophy. Right and wrong, time and space are the same for man and woman, just as are digestion and the circulation of the blood and all the other phenomena of mental and physical life. Nor is society's object the maintenance of purity, maidenhood, for does it not despise or at best pity its single women? Nay, more, does it not found itself on marriage? Further every scheme, hesitate at none that leads to that end? Seal with its most flattering approval and applause the legalised performance of an act which it otherwise damns? As if the word of priest or civil official could add one iota to the most personal act of man's and woman's life! No; it is not morality, it is not purity, it is not anything high or noble now, whatever it originally may have been. It is the low principle of barter and sale, of possessing and being possessed. The woman is dependent on the man, requires from him support, and to strengthen her claim, to make it binding upon him, she must bring him an adequate equivalent. And that which his egoism values most is her inviolate body.

Nay, nay! if it be a sin, it is no more a sin for me than it is for him, let society say what it will. Surely neither it nor any individual in it is the

worse for the caresses we exchange. Yet must I cower before discovery as if what I do were a crime against all men. But 'tis fear makes me cower, not the conviction of sin; fear of the material ruin, the social ostracism that discovery would bring upon me. And the moral injury to me is the having this demoralising and debasing sensation of fear, with all its despicable accompaniment of subterfuge and cowardly concealment."

Oft during the ensuing weeks did Letitia renew this self-examination; and always with the same result of self-acquittal, which nevertheless did not acquit with the absolute finis of a final verdict. Again and again must the case be reopened, as if the highest court of all within her had not been reached.

She had more and more time for such introspection as her pupils began to drop away. The first one or two of these defections she did not especially regard, thinking them unfortunate coincidences no more. But when one by one the others followed and finally from the deacon's wife, who had secured her most of them, came a curt, cold note dismissing her from the two hours' daily coaching she had been giving her daughter, Letitia knew that society had found her out, and was putting its invariable sentence into execution. Her situation would have been desperate, had not a gentleman acquaintance, a former student under her father, who had become editor in a large publishing house, given her work

to do, reading manuscript and the like, thus enabling her to pay her way.

Mrs. Ball alone of her old patrons continued to employ her, but that position was rapidly becoming precarious: the treatment she met with—the coldness, asperity, and suspicion—being such as to make her proud spirit revolt. Moreover, Mrs. Ball had daily less and less for her to do. The dainty, scented envelopes, enclosing invitations of all kinds, which had fluttered in by the dozen with the morning mail, grew fewer and fewer, although the fashionable world was in its last mad rush before Lent. Finally came a day when only a couple of business letters awaited her attention.

Was it that, she wondered, made the atmosphere in the work room so portentous this morning? Mrs. Ball's eyes fairly blazed, and her ruddled face was purple with inward heat, and seamed with all the lines of anxiety, impatience, and irritation that had of late shown themselves there. She dictated her answers to the letters in short, sharp tones, hurrying through them, plainly impatient to have them out of the way, and as soon as they were, she burst out:

"So Philip Euston's mother's comin' home from Europe?"

Letitia flushed crimson with the shock of this unexpected news. She knew before Mrs. Ball spoke that the crash was coming, but she was not prepared for it to come in this way, and she could not speak, though Mrs. Ball waited a long moment for her to

do so. Then, with an impatient movement, the latter went on:

"It must be somethin' important to bring her back *here*. She don't like New York—it don't agree with her," and Mrs. Ball chuckled in suppressed but malicious mirth. "She's a very fine lady," she added. "I s'pose he's told you 'bout her. He's proud of his mother, is Mr. Philip—his fine lady mother," and the chuckle deepened into a laugh, bitter as the hate that had vibrated through every word.

Letitia, despite her own sickening emotions, marked this and remembered that Mrs. Ball had made almost the same remark and in the same tone of Philip himself. He had not mentioned his mother's coming—could it have been to spare *her?* Was the lady indeed returning, as Mrs. Ball's manner implied, on account of *her?* of their—Oh, no! it could not, it should not, be!

The mere thought that it might be was hardly to be borne. Philip had spoken of his mother, and in a way to have given her an impression of a veritable *grande dame*, a woman to respect and to be respected by. Yet Mrs. Ball's tone of hate was contemptuous, too. What was there, what could there have been between gentleman Philip's fine lady-mother and this peasant woman here?

Her mute, wide stare, at once dazed and discerning, seemed to put Mrs. Ball beside herself. She clutched the newspaper on her lap with trembling

hands that made it rustle as she crushed it, and at the same time she broke out loudly:

"Why don't you speak, girl? Or is it true you're *intimate* with Philip Euston?"

Letitia had braced herself against the word, yet it brought her to her feet in a flame of indignation; but the next instant she was grasping blindly at the back of her chair for support, while her blood, ebbed, ebbed till she thought life, too, was going from her.

"*That's* what they're saying of you, Letitia Berkeley," cried Mrs. Ball, as the girl slowly straightened up with returning life and strength. "And I, *I* am bein' punished, *cut*, for that lie 'bout you're bein' an heiress!"

"*What* lie?" cried Letitia in her turn, finding speech at last in her amazement. "*What* lie?"

"Oh, I know *you* had nothin' to do with *that!*" exclaimed Mrs. Ball hastily, apologetically, in the face of the girl's white wrath. "It was his doin's. He was bound to have you to my cotillion, and of course you couldn't come as what you were, just a nice, handsome girl. The handsomest and the cleverest one among them, that's what you were, more's the pity, more's the pity! Oh, Letitia Berkeley, didn't I tell you that night to make 'em pay high, and that's marriage."

"Will you have the kindness to continue, Mrs. Ball?" cut in Letitia, with icy politeness. "I am naturally rather anxious to hear how I was made

to play the impostor. An impostor! I? And *now!*" she added, still in the same coldly quiet tones.

But Mrs. Ball felt the fire under them and it frightened her. "Lord, girl!" she exclaimed, "don't take it more serious than it is. It was a joke, after all, and a joke on them, drat them! He said they'd see no difference between you and them if they thought you was rich. Nor was there any difference except to your advantage. 'Let's introduce her as a prospective heiress,' says he to me, 'just to see what a fuss they'll make over her. It's only a question of ducats with them.' And it is, and they did make a fuss over you, and afterwards they all wanted to know where you lived, so they could call on you. And they wouldn't have minded the heiress part of its bein' a lie, a joke on them so much, nor I shouldn't have minded my share in it either, if he was goin' to marry you. But if you're only his ——"

An imperious gesture from Letitia stopped the word on her lips; stopped it and drove it back, and when she resumed, as she did a moment later, it was to say almost deprecatingly:

"They scent anything like that out like bloodhounds, and since that night of the blizzard when Dicky Smalley and I saw you with him, it's all got out, for he left me and followed you, and saw you go into his rooms. And *they're mad.* But instead of punishin' *him*, they're punishin' *me!* You see I don't get invited any more, but *he* does, because he's

in their set. Oh, I know them, these women," she cried, in rising and angry tones. "It's the women does these things, and consequently it's always the *woman* has to suffer. They let the man go free, if he isn't *their* man. And what are *they* to put on so much virtue? They 're all liars, one way or another, and backbiters. They've thieves in their set, too, and gluttons, and fornicators, and adulteresses. But it don't matter so long as it's *in* their set and don't get too public. Yes, yes, I know *them*, down to the ground; but, by the Lord, they don't know *me*, if they think they can take me up as they did, and pump me dry for their charities that ain't charities at all, only bolsters for their pride—and then drop me again for a fault of one of their own's committin'. And Philip Euston, what's *he!* If they knew what I——ah!"

She broke off suddenly, gasping for breath, her purple face deeper in hue. Staggering to her feet, she swayed forward and would have fallen had not Letitia sprung to her side and caught her in her strong young arms. A turn of the hand loosened the tight velvet collar that was binding the short, red, swollen neck, and, dragging her to the window, she opened it upon her. The fresh air had its effect, Mrs. Ball revived.

"There," she said at last, when, from being able to stand, she found that she could walk back to her seat unassisted, though Letitia kept near her, for from red she had turned to a mottled white, and plainly had received a shock.

"Thank you, my girl," she continued, gruffly grateful. "You saved me from a fit, sure." Then she reached out and took Letitia's hand and drew her down to add in a confidential whisper, "Tell me, now, he's goin' to marry you? He's promised you marriage?" Her manner was friendly again, almost entreating, but Letitia drew back her hand and stiffened coldly:

"There has been no word of marriage between Mr. Euston and me, Mrs. Ball." She longed to add more, to pour out all the avalanche of thoughts and feelings that had swept over her in this fateful half-hour; but she did not speak, and presently Mrs. Ball broke the silence with a sterner question:

"And what they say is ——"

"*Was* true," cut in Letitia with a ringing emphasis on the preterite that made Mrs. Ball start and look up at her inquiringly.

But again the girl was dumb with unconquerable reserve, with indomitable pride.

Mrs. Ball, watching her, saw the silence and the pride settle into her face and her own wrath burst all bounds.

"Go!" she shouted violently. "Out of my house, you strumpet!"

Letitia cried out as if she had been struck, reeled, withered. Then the blood surged back to her brain, to her hands which balled themselves into fists while for one tremendous moment the impulse possessed her to fall upon the insulter and pound her

to death. But as quickly as it had risen the murderous impulse fell, and she was leaving Mrs. Ball's house without another word.

CHAPTER X

AN AWAKENING

THE reaction had come by the time she reached the sidewalk, and she was trembling so that she nearly fell. As she stood for a moment, recovering her strength, she turned and looked up at the house —a long, last look. How much had happened to her, what changes had come since first she had entered its doors, five months before! Five months! —it might have been five years:

> "We live in deeds not years; in thoughts not breaths;
> In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
> We should count time by heart-throbs, not by hours.
> He most lives, who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

"And that I have not done," she added to herself mournfully, as she turned away, up Madison Avenue, on and on till she came to and entered Central Park. A revolution was taking place within her, had taken place as she sat, quivering and amazed, beneath the hot rain of Mrs. Ball's complaint. That had affected her as the loss of all her pupils had not, though their defection had been like so many blows, bruising her pride with the condemnation it implied.

But that was for herself, no other had to bear it, and she felt strongly, defiantly able to bear it in her scorn of its source. But here was another suffering from her deed, and on the instant its entire aspect had changed for her. It had ceased to be exclusively subjective in its meaning for her, it had become objective; and she stood away from it, so to speak, and looked at it through another medium than that of her own personality.

"How we are all chained together!" she exclaimed to herself, "by custom and social usage! like slaves in the galleys, so that the movement of one affects all the rest, and individual action is well-nigh impossible! I think myself free to do something that seems to me to concern only myself, that ought only to concern myself, and I find I am harming a neighbour to whom I wish no ill. And yet it is not I who have harmed her, but he, *he*—with his lies! Why did he lie about me? Was it to excuse to his set his passion for me? I did not wish to thrust my self upon them, but he insisted. What was his motive? Insatiable egotism? a desire to have their approval? Or had he other intentions in regard to me then? Would he have asked me to marry him if?—Gracious heavens! and I would have done it, perhaps! *would* have married him—with my body, and let my mind, which he has never touched, sink into atrophy! Such, and so strong is the lower nature!"

She paused in her communing as she came to a little bridge spanning the bridle-path, paused and

looked along it to see three equestrians, a man and a woman followed by a mounted groom, approaching. As soon as she saw them clearly she sprang back from the bridge till they had passed beneath it, then she advanced to the railing again and looked after them :—Philip Euston and his fast blond cousin. How well she remembered the fierce pang of jealousy she had felt the first time she saw them together—in Mrs. Ball's dimly lighted boudoir. And now how different were her feelings! She looked after them calmly, contemptuously :—

"He has lied, intrigued, made me cheap to the public lip, but he is none the less acceptable, whilst Mrs. Ball and I pay the penalty which society feels must be exacted somewhere. Mrs. Ball is right : it is not what you *do* but who you *are* makes the difference. That blonde there can strip herself half naked to the public gaze, and indulge with impunity an appetite that in her washerwoman would be condemned as drunkenness. She is ignorant, immodest, coarse at heart, yet she is accepted, whilst I am damned because I yielded to an impulse that at least was natural, not perverted like a taste for drink. O human justice, thou art a wondrous thing!"

She went back to her room after that and wrote to Philip, breaking with him briefly. No details, no explanations, no accusations. It was characteristic of her, characteristic, too, of the nature of her feeling for him, that she had never once confided to him any of the changes, emotional or material, which that feeling had brought to her. Through all the

troubles of the previous weeks, when her pupils were dropping away from her day by day, and the dire question of actual want threatened to present itself, she had not so much as thought of an appeal to him; and her deeper personal feelings, those even which he had stirred or stilled, she had kept as rigidly to herself. She had not even sought to justify to him, as she had to herself, the break through custom that had brought her to his arms. He had touched the surface of her character at a time when its depths were agitated by inward tumult, but those depths he had never reached, and now they surged up and cast him off like a bit of flotsam tossed upon the sand. The passion that had swayed her, whose birth and development had cost her so much, was purged at last of its dross, and her intellectual nature was free to rise once more to its normal supremacy.

Early in the morning of the next day she left New York for the New England village where her father lived. She found him ill, too ill to wonder at her abrupt return, or to ask any of the questions before which she had been, in imagination, quailing. And he was never to ask them, for before the week was over the cold that had so sickened him out of his normal self, had borne him away to face the eternal judgment he believed in. And the daughter whom he would so surely have condemned was mistress in his stead of his small earthly possessions. Barely five thousand dollars all told, when everything was realised, but enough to make possible what from

her earliest student days had been the desire of her heart—the study of medicine.

Not in America, however. She must have a positive change of scene, other environment; far, far removed from the "bloodhound scent" that had followed her here to her childhood's home, and set the faces of her townsfolk, too, against her.

And so it came about that once again early in the morning, she slipped out of New York by stealth, per steamer this time, bound for Paris and a new profession.

CHAPTER XI

A WOMAN AT BAY

MEANTIME Mrs. Ball had lain very ill. The attack of vertigo that had sent her reeling into Letitia's arms must be regarded, her physician said, as a serious warning; and it had been followed by weeks of prostration. Many were the thoughts that had come to her as she lay there beneath her satin coverlet; and some of them had hardened into decisions which, as soon as she was able to leave her bed for the boudoir opening off it, she proceeded to put into execution.

She began by sending for Philip Euston who had just returned to New York with his mother from a recuperating visit to California. This and the further fact that "Society" was making much of Mrs. Euston's welcome reappearance in its midst, Mrs. Ball had learned from the daily papers, whose stock reports and fashionable intelligence she had managed to read regularly in spite of her illness and her physician's protest. It was almost her only means now of keeping herself informed of the gay routine which she had hitherto shared.

"They" had shown no sympathy for her on her

bed of sickness; only two or three even of her own church members had taken the trouble to call or to send the flowers and the messages which she knew and which they knew that she knew were proper to the occasion, whether the sympathy that is supposed to prompt such attentions were behind them or not. It was part of what she had paid for, and Mrs. Ball knew also the value of money too well not to feel cheated when she did not get its worth. To be sure the Lenten season, and the consequent scattering for change of air, might account for some of this neglect, but not sufficiently to allay her wrath which rose with her from her bed, the deeper and the fiercer for the enforced delay.

One advantage, however, it had given her: the opportunity to think out and mature a plan. This done she could hardly wait to begin operations till she was strong enough to do so without further injury to herself. As it was she still trembled and looked white with bodily weakness as she received Philip Euston. But with bodily weakness only. Her strong spirit had never been stronger than it was that day when from the sofa in her boudoir she faced him as he entered at its door.

He saw this, and his was the spirit that quailed before the approaching encounter though he was practised enough to mask his confusion behind the conventional phrases which, like the flowers *et cetera* that she had missed, were proper to the occasion.

But these were not what Mrs. Ball wanted of him and she cut him short by saying so:

"You know what I've sent for you for, Philip Euston. What have you done with Letitia Berkeley?"

Of course he knew why she had sent for him, but he tried to bluff her off, nevertheless: "I am not Miss Berkeley's keeper, Mrs. Ball."

"Well, if you ain't you ought to be," she answered bluntly. "And you must know where she is, if you haven't played her some dirty trick."

"Mrs. Ball, if you please, I don't play tricks." The disclaimer began haughtily enough, but it ended lamely as he remembered what she at once proceeded to remind him of:—

"Oh, yes, you do, when it helps your game. Take that lie 'bout her bein' an heiress."

He was well aware of the storm this had raised. Indeed he had tried, to his credit be it said, to shield Mrs. Ball by taking the entire responsibility to himself; though he had finally, in his pique at Letitia's sudden and inexplicable desertion, got himself out of the mess by leaving New York, and affairs there to run their course.

"I never regretted anything more in my life," he murmured, pulling nervously at his moustache. "I can't imagine what induced me to show such bad form."

"Humph! Bad form!" exclaimed Mrs. Ball. "It was worse than bad form. It was *ruin* for the girl, for it made her conspicuous and set them to findin' out, what they might otherwise never have suspected. And that lost her her scholars, her means

of gettin' an *honest* living. That's the way many a prostitute is made, Philip Euston—drove to it. And I tell you, if you ain't supportin' that girl at this minute you ought to be, for it's you that's ruined her."

Philip had started, then controlled himself and sunk back in the chair into which he had subsided, and by the time she was through he was able to say calmly, "But, my dear Mrs. Ball, why, please, should you infer—"

"I don't *infer* anything," she broke in succinctly. "I know it. She told me."

He started again, quite out of his aplomb: "Do you mean to say that Miss Berkeley—" then he caught himself up with a nervous laugh:—"Really, Mrs. Ball, you must excuse me, but——"

"Don't try any bluffs on me," came her answer, crashing in like a straight-out blow. "You know I don't lie unless I have to, nor she either. I wrung it out of her of course, back there in that room where I suppose your fun began the night of my party.—Oh, yes, I know that too. You done it badly that time, from the first. You gave yourself away right through, and what was worse, you gave away the girl. Dicky Smalley was watching you that night, and the night of the storm, too, when you took her to your rooms."

"Damn him!" cried Philip through his teeth. "Damn him!"

"No, it's her that's damned, God help her!" cried Mrs. Ball.

"Oh, don't," he groaned, breaking down frankly, "don't!" and he put his hand up before his eyes, but a moment later he had dropped it, and, sitting erect, was facing her squarely:

"Does Miss Berkeley say that I—"

"She don't say that you anything," interrupted Mrs. Ball contemptuously. "She only said when I drove her to it, that what they were sayin' of *her* was true, and that there hadn't been any word about marriage. *Marriage*," she repeated with a short, hard laugh, "as if it wasn't the woman's place to make sure of that—*first*."

Philip sprang to his feet. "Well," he exclaimed impatiently, "and then?"

"And then," she repeated, with a deeper sneer, at herself this time, "*I* came the virtuous matron too,—I, Mary Ball, after all I've seen of life!—and I ordered her out of my house, though I knew, God forgive me, that I was takin' her last *honest* customer away from her—of *our* crowd at least."

"Mrs. Ball!" cried Philip, white-hot, "Mrs. Ball, there are things I won't hear said of Miss Berkeley even behind her back and in *our crowd*, you know!"

Could she feel it, as he felt it, all the withering scorn he flung out with these words? "*Our crowd*," indeed! His and hers, hell and damnation!—

At any rate the outburst did him good. It was like a blood-letting, and there was almost the flicker of a smile about his lips, as, seeing the scene for himself, he resumed more calmly. "And she? what

did she do when you ordered her out of your house?"

Mrs. Ball's lips twitched a little too: "Why she went of course—like the Queen of Sheba."

Philip's smile broadened to a gleam of white teeth: "She was game, that woman," he said enjoyingly, "game to her finger-tips."

"Then you admire her still?" exclaimed Mrs. Ball, catching him up.

"Of course I do," answered Philip heartily. "She was the grandest woman I have ever known—quite the heroic mould. I used to tell her she was more like those war-maidens of Wagner's, those Valkyries, don't you know, than an ordinary girl."

"If only the worst hasn't come?" was Mrs. Ball's reply to this—a muttered comment.

"The *worst?*" he echoed, startled and leaning anxiously toward her, to recoil the next instant and flush deep as he read her gaze: "Good God, no! Not *that!* If I thought *that* I would search the world over till I found her, and would see her through it, don't you know. 'Pon my word, I would."

Mrs. Ball was beginning to believe him at last: "Then you mean to tell me, young man, that you honestly don't know where she is?"

"Upon my word of honour, Mrs. Ball, I do not," he answered earnestly. "She broke it off, not I. Weeks ago, before I went to California, I received a note from her one morning—most unexpectedly—telling me that she was leaving town—would have

left in fact by the time I got it—and that—that she was done with me, in short," he concluded bravely, but with his mortification at the mitten showing plainly in his face. "Here is the letter, if you wish for proof of my word," he added haughtily and yet still shamefacedly, as he drew it from his pocket.

Perhaps he hoped that she would be content with seeing it, and would spare him a re-reading, but she did not. She took it from him and spread it out, and putting on her glasses, read slowly and aloud:

"My Dear Mr. Euston:

"When you receive this letter I shall have left New York—for ever, so far as you are concerned. Please do me the favour to accept this as irrevocably final, and believe me,

"Very truly yours,

"Letitia Berkeley."

"Humph! Well she didn't waste many words on that job!" was Mrs. Ball's dry comment. The brief letter pleased her strangely, feeling as she did the repression in it; for it bore, as she had suspected, the date of the day when she had had with the writer the scene from the effects of which she was still tottering.

"It was that was in her face," she added more to herself than to him, "when she sailed out of here that day I discharged her. I was frightened for a moment at what I had done, she was that high strung. I was afraid she might be going to kill

herself. 'But no,' says I to myself, 'she won't do that. She's the kind that lives and fights it out to the bitter end.' That's a strong woman, and a proud one, Philip Euston," she concluded giving him back his letter.

"Yes, dev'lish proud," he agreed again, right heartily. "She kept one at arm's length even when—" he broke off with a shrug to resume on another tack: "I trust now, Mrs. Ball, that you will believe me when I assure you that I had no idea that she was in any straits, financial or otherwise. She never gave me a hint of anything of the kind."

"Of course not," cried Mrs. Ball, whose heart had suddenly grown big with kindness and comprehension of the girl. "Of course not! *She* was a proud woman, I tell you, Philip Euston; proud as the women who have driven her away from here in disgrace never thought of being. What she had to *give* was not for *sale*. But they are, all of them that ain't sold already. They've all got their price, and not for men only, but for women too. *I've* bought 'em—every one of them, some high, some low,—but you can always find the price somewhere between a ribbon and a blank check. I've never failed to find it yet. I've sat in your opera-house and seen in my mind's eye the sum I had paid for its acquaintance blazin' on every box. And I've ben to your weddin's and heard your snob preachers join in the name of God those whom they knew, and I knew, and everybody else there knew, money

and money *only*, had brought together. But the woman that gives and takes only love has the preachers and their God, and man, and the worst married harlot among you against her. Oh, I've thought of that girl as I lay there on my bed, facin' *my* God in thought. I've thought of her, and of you! and of how she and I have had to pay for *your* fun. And now *you've* got to pay. You've got to square us before your pack that's ben houndin' us to ruin; you've got to *marry* her, Philip Euston!"

He had sat down at the beginning of her diatribe; he had leaned back rather wearily in the midst of it; but with her peroration he had straightened up till, at the end of it, he was on his feet again, drawn to his full height in haughty amazement at her presumption, for stronger even than her words was the tone in which she voiced them: a tone that made his answer sharply short and stern:

"That is absolutely impossible, Mrs. Ball."

"Why?" and again her voice rang ominously near a threat.

He met it this time *en grand seigneur*, cold, deliberate, icily polite: "Because, my dear madam, when it comes to marriage, there are other things to be considered besides mere inclination. And not money merely. We're a pretty bad lot, I agree with you there—always have, if you remember. But there *is* such a thing as family feeling, family pride among us—some of us at any rate—a *noblesse oblige* if you please. I could not, if only for the scandal—"

"And who's to blame for *that*, I'd like to know,

but *you?*" she cried, enraged. "Letitia Berkeley was a good girl till *you* got after her."

"I am not aware that I have said that she is not a good girl now," he returned, still in the, for him unwonted, tone which made, which was meant to make, Mrs. Ball feel all the wide difference between them. "I will not marry her, however, so be good enough to drop the subject. Anything short of that," he was adding the next moment, glad to be able to appear his amiable self again,—"Yes indeed, and gladly. I will pay her expenses for as long as she may need it. Or give a lump sum—Bah!" he broke off with a gesture of disgust, "what am I saying? What have you made me say? You are giving it a wrong colour, Mrs. Ball!" he exclaimed almost appealingly. "Doing both Let—Miss Berkeley and me a wrong. We never thought of anything like this. I'm sure, I'd take my oath for her on that. It's not the money," he added, warmly. "You know I am not mean. But—why, she would hardly let me give her a flower!"

"She'll let you give her a wedding-ring, though," said Mrs. Ball in that hard voice of hers which no such sentiments as these could soften.

"But that, unfortunately, is the one reparation I cannot offer," he replied, stiffening again at her insistence. "You force me to be explicit, Mrs. Ball; I will not take for my wife, I will not present to *my mother*, I will not give my *father's* name to a woman who has been"—he stopped and frowned, and tugged painfully at his moustache—'twas a nasty

thing to have to do, don't you know,—" who has been my *mistress*."

"There we have it!" cried Mrs. Ball in triumph. "*There we have it!*" and she sprang to her feet and swept over to where the young man stood, and faced him squarely. "You're sure then, are you, that the Euston who gave your mother *his* name *was* your father?"

"Mrs. Ball!" thundered Philip, with clenching fists and crimson face. "Mrs. B—"

"Wait!" she thundered, too, striking down his passion with a passion that made it pale. "Wait, now, till I've said *my* say. It's *my* turn now!"

Her turn indeed. For the second time that morning Philip quailed, this time visibly, before a power stronger than anything in him, a power that swept over him and bore him irresistibly along.

"We were born and brought up in the same town, your mother and me. *She* was Judge Treadwell's daughter—our first people. *My* father was the blacksmith, and my husband's father was the carpenter. But we all went to the same church and the same school; we had to say the same prayers and the same A, B, C, high and low. Your mother held her head very high—so high that when she got older and was sent off here to New York for her finishin', she hadn't any eyes in vacation times for her old village schoolmates, *except my husband*. He was han'some from a boy, and from a boy she had liked him. And when she came home in winter she'd go up where he was haulin' wood and ride down on the

load with him, and in summer she drew pictures of him while he cut it, and so it went on till the winter he married me. She was away at the time, in Europe, gettin' a polish on her finishin'; and she didn't come back for three or four years, not till her father was dying. Then she had a husband, too, a worn-out aristocrat, twenty years older than herself, and given to drink. But he was a *Euston*, so of course that didn't matter." She paused with a sneering laugh, and Philip made another move to speak. But she stopped him again with a determined gesture.

"He *was* a gentleman, though, to the very core, your mother's husband, and many's the talk I've had with him that done me good. He had been everywhere and seen everything,—done everything, too, as I used to tell him, to his sorrow." Again Mrs. Ball paused, back in the past she was recalling; and this time Philip did not attempt to speak, but, grown very pale, waited patiently for her to proceed.

"He was a good business man, too," she resumed, "when he wasn't in his cups. 'Twas he made the first move to get the railroad to our town. But he had to have my husband's help to do it, for Mr. Ball ran the politics of Somerville and had a pull in the legislature, too. So it was that all that summer when they were workin' the scheme, my husband was up at the big house very often, to dinner and to spend the evenin' talkin' it over; and it was mostly with your mother that the business was done, for by the end of the day Mr. Euston's head was generally

thick with drink. And one evenin' when they had left him as usual at the table asleep over his bottle for the butler to look after, and were shut up in the library alone, your proud, tall mother comes close up to *my* husband, and says she: 'John, you're just my height,' and—well, when the nine months were over *you* were born.'

"It's a lie, by God!" cried Philip.

"It ain't a lie!" cried Mrs. Ball. "It's God's own truth. Look at his picture downstairs there in my parlour and see for yourself if it ain't."

Philip started; he had been joked about this resemblance more than once, and he had laughingly acknowledged it himself, but now he ground his teeth at the reminder of it, and hid his face and groaned.

"Ask your *mother*," Mrs. Ball went on, "or I will in your presence. My husband confessed it to me on his dying bed. *I* didn't know it till then, and I'd have carried it with me to *my* grave for his sake, if you hadn't played me such a *bastard's* trick, gettin' me cut and insulted by your proud mother's proud friends."

Philip had made a gesture of dissent, shuddering and shrinking at the galling epithet. But she continued relentlessly:

"And what right has Madeline Euston to be proud? Wasn't she an adulteress? Didn't she tempt my husband to turn adulterer? He said himself he never would have thought of it if *she* hadn't proposed it. At the very time, too, when *I* was big

with his child. And my boy died, *died*, while you, *you live*, Philip? *Bastard!*" A bitter, bitter laugh rang out with the words which had risen like a cry from the heart that had bled over its excruciating secret so many years, and, forgetting her weakness in these memories of woe, the excited woman paced her boudoir with rapid steps, flinging looks of defiance, hatred, and threatening at Philip, who had sunk into a chair, his face buried in his hands.

Presently she spoke again, more to herself, however, than to him: "I tried to forgive him, I *had* to, when he asked me with that pinched look of death on his face, but I didn't mourn for him, though he was all I had, as I would have done if he'd kep' faith with me as I kep' it with him in thought and deed all those years we lived and worked together. But I never forgave *her*, and, *by God, I never will.*" She stopped short before Philip as she spoke, the incarnation of implacable revenge.

He, looking up, pale and agitated, realised this—in his heart understood it: "Does she—my mother—know that you—"

"Know of her sin?" concluded Mrs. Ball for him, as he paused, appalled at what her directness revelled in. "I guess she does. It didn't take but one look from me that day she dared to come here to his funeral, to send her out of this house and out of New York; and to keep her out of it till now. What's she back for now? That girl?"

Philip, utterly off his guard, nodded a sickened assent.

"I *knew* it! I *knew* it!" she exclaimed in another fierce burst of triumph. "Oh, but that pride of hers will bend now, or, by the Lord, I'll break it! Either you will agree to do what I want you to—or—"

"Or what, Mrs. Ball?" asked Philip quietly.

"Or the newspapers shall have the whole story, yours and hers.—You don't think I'd do it? Wait, if you dare, and see."

But Philip did not need to wait. He saw. "And your alternative," he said quietly, as before, "is——"

"Marriage for the girl. Justice for her and for me—atonement for all you and your mother have made me suffer. And this is how I want it: I'm goin' to adopt Letitia Berkeley as my daughter. I'm going to make the heiress of her in earnest that you did in fun, and you are to marry her. It won't be such a bad deal for you, young man," she added, on a lower key, and with the shrewd glint in her eyes that even this high moment could not altogether banish. "I'll give her a million the day the weddin' comes off, and there'll be about 'leven more and this house to follow after I'm gone."

Did it bring relief to Philip's strain, too, this golden panacea? Certainly his voice was clearer when, after a pause, he said: "And if I consent, my name, my mother's name, will be spared—?"

"No human being will ever know from me what's passed between us here this morning."

"Not even Letitia?"

"Not even Letitia—my God, Philip Euston, do you think I'm anxious to expose my dead husband's shame?—*My* shame?"

The young man shrank again. His shame, too! He had been very proud of his origin in his genial, gentle way. It was always with him, the massive, all-pervading, soothing sense of having been born above the herd. And now—many thoughts whirled through his brain, memories of his childhood, a putting of this and that together. After the first horrified revolt, he had not doubted the truth of Mrs. Ball's revelation.

She, meantime, stood quietly and watched him: silent, patient—the awful patience of a ruthless resolve.

And at last came his final surrender: "I accept your conditions, Mrs. Ball. That is, of course, I must see my—my mother first."

"Of course, that's your right," she promptly agreed, and along with the grim triumph on her face was the savage satisfaction of the thought of what that interview would be for proud Madeline Euston. "I'll expect you back here, though, before night," she added, as poor Philip, still the gentleman in spite of his disaster, bowed himself out.

She listened, her breast heaving with the effort her painful victory had cost her, listened, standing in the doorway, while Philip's step, grown suddenly heavy like a weary old man's, descended the stairs to the hall below. Then there was a pause, and she knew that he had gone into the drawing-room to

look, in the light of her exposure, at the portrait hanging there, and across the stern triumph in her face swept a wave of contending emotions. But she downed them fiercely and stood with knitted brows, resolved, implacable, till the step sounded once more in the hall below, and the front door closed. Then, flinging herself face downward on her couch, the lonely, stricken woman burst into a storm of tears.

CHAPTER XII

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

PARIS, and late afternoon in early summer.—

Letitia, leaving the École de Médecine, turned into a narrow street leading thence up past the Odéon to the Luxembourg gardens. They lay in her direction, and a walk through them would refresh her after her long day of clinics and lectures. She had been in Paris some weeks and was in the full swing of her medical studies, whose fascination was already upon her. Man in all his complexity as a living organism was being revealed to her, and she herself, independent and free, was leading the busy, Bohemian life of a student in the Latin Quarter. The incessant occupation and variety were most grateful to her, for she was not entirely at peace within ; she had brought regrets with her to this foreign land, regrets that she should have yielded as she had, to the solicitations of her grosser self. It seemed to her inexcusable weakness, now that the glow and impetus of passion had given place to a calmer state of mind. She had been guilty of a physiological excess which her higher nature de-

plored. It had been purely physiological; that was plain to her now in the light of these new studies. Why then must she have this humiliating, this well-nigh intolerable feeling that nevertheless there remained upon her from it an indelible moral stain? Was it not purely conventional, this emotional aftermath of pain and self-abasement? this insidious sense of loss that now and again chilled her reviving self-respect with sinister reproval? Conventional? the result of heredity and early training? What this had been she had realised as she bent over her dead father in his coffin, with intense relief that he need never know how false she had been to the high standard he would have had her maintain. *He* had maintained such a standard: he had resisted the lower nature, conquered it. She could read that in the deep-graven lines in his dead face. Perhaps that was why she had not been able to do so—nature's pendulum, swung too far one way in one generation, had, in readjusting itself, swung too far the other in the next. Or, was it rather, that another generation of development had sent her on a generation in advance of where he stood? Were then the moral laws that guided his conduct still to be binding on her? Moral laws based upon his unacceptable creed, theorised from just such cold, ascetic brains as his. Moral laws that disregard nature's, which demand a changing standard of conduct for changing forms and conditions of life.

Absorbed in these thoughts she walked slowly on through the gardens till, suddenly, her introspective

glance was startled back to outward things by the sight of a tall form which was rapidly approaching her. She would have fled, but there was no escape for her—Philip Euston was already at her side.

"I am just coming from your house," he explained. "The concierge told me I would probably meet you along here somewhere." He spoke hastily, deprecatingly, for she had not welcomed him, and he could see in her face the agitation his sudden appearance had caused her. He was agitated too, nervous and pale, and there were lines of care in his formerly careless face, but his charming exterior, manner and all, was as faultless as ever. She noted this in one swift glance as they moved on together, then she demanded coldly:

"Why have you come? Did you not understand?"

"I did not want to understand anything so—so cruel," he replied, adding more confidently, "I have come to ask you to marry me, Letitia."

She flushed and paled with surprise, but she set her lips firmly and motioned him to silence when he would have added something more. She was thinking how she had left New York, scorned, condemned, dismissed by married women. Even up into New England it had followed her, through the deacon's worthy wife, and her old friends had looked askance at her, and there had been gossip. And by-and-by it might reach her here and she would have to bear all over again the crucifixion of curious, scornful looks, and pointed avoidance. And so on

through life, she could never be sure that some cruel whisper might not come to mar her usefulness and immolate her pride. It would be soul-satisfying triumph, to go back among them, a married woman too, re-established in the very eyes that had been so scornfully averted from her. She could even punish some, the deacon's wife, for instance, and two or three others whose social position was not what hers would be were she to become Philip Euston's wife. His *wife* though, bound to *his* side, forced to submit to his proximity, which had ceased to have any attraction for her; limited herself mentally by his narrow mental limits, losing all of life except the ghastly succession of inane frivolity that filled his time! And to such gilded stagnation sacrifice this new, free, and busy life of ennobling study, with its inspiring goal of a large and useful career! She blushed in shame at herself that the thought could for an instant have tempted her with its base suggestions of revenge and spite. And such and other such would be the motives that would sway her, did she yield to it; and down ever deeper would she sink into the mire of petty vice that makes society's atmosphere so foul!

"Never!" she exclaimed aloud, almost violently, angry at him for her own temporary hesitation. Then her expression softened: after all he apparently meant well, no need to be so brusque.

"I am sorry, Mr. Euston, but it is absolutely impossible."

He frowned and bit his lip: the very response

that he had made so swellingly to Mrs Ball before she had put the screws on of the secret that was torturing him now. "You are angry!" he exclaimed, "because I did not speak of marriage before."

"Not for that," she answered. "Not, indeed, for anything, any more. I thought I was when I first saw you, but now I know I wasn't. With me what's done is done. Wait, please, let me finish what I have to say. I wish you to understand distinctly that I do not hold you in any way responsible for what occurred. I did what I did with my eyes open though I did not indeed see clearly as I do now. But that perversion was subjective, *you* had nothing to do with it. I do not blame you, I do not want any reparation from you, I acquit you entirely. Always remember this, Philip Euston: I loved you spontaneously, because I had to love just then. But almost any other man would have done as well, for the love I gave you wasn't real love at all. I thought it was, of course, till I woke up, or rather was waked up, to the fact that it wasn't. Then I left you. For it was *you* I left, not New York, as others think, as you perhaps think, because of the gossip of narrow-minded women."

"But I am responsible for that gossip," said Philip, who had not half understood her proud explanation, —"with my stupid lies. And I want to make it right, I want to—to clear your honour, don't you know."

The word was banal and ill-chosen, Letitia turned upon him with the curling lip of scorn: "My *honour*! But it is just because I want to keep that

clear that I acted as I did, as I do. Oh, I know what you think, you and the world you represent: the *marriage ceremony* makes all good—justifies the most flagrant prostitution. That is what it would be were I to marry you, feeling as I do toward you now. Honour? I should be deep-dyed in *dis*honour were I to take on a wife's name without a wife's feelings; and all the ceremonies in the world could not inspire me with a wife's feelings for you." She paused, constraining herself to silence, though the current of her thoughts still rushed hotly on.

And Philip also was silent,—too angry to trust himself to speak. Though much of what she had said had gone clean over his head, enough had gone in to make him aware that he was being rejected on moral as well as personal grounds. On *moral* grounds, and by *her?* He, Philip Euston, rejected at all!—

He had stipulated with Mrs Ball, that he was to win Letitia for himself, to have won her, before any hint was given her of the rich woman's intentions toward her. It soothed his wounded pride to feel that to the girl at any rate he was to appear in the generous light of a man ready to make honourable amends. The very substantial reward for himself of the fortune involved would indeed diminish the glory of his conduct. He perceived all the awkwardness of this detail, though it had not troubled him much, trusting as he did to one of those happy inspirations of which he still felt himself to be capable, to help him through the delicate task of acquainting her with it. But no happy inspiration came to

help him face this unforeseen rejection, and so it happened that, abruptly and awkwardly, without a preliminary word of any kind, he drew a letter from his pocket and thrust it at her.

When she saw that it was addressed to her, she took it and sat down on a bench to read it, Philip dropping down beside her, fairly limp with mortification at his sudden want of *savoir faire*. In the few weeks that had elapsed since the horrid secret of his birth was sprung upon him, he had caught himself lapsing like this more than once. Great God, was his good breeding only a veneer too, after all? a veneer like his name of Euston?—

The letter, which had been written by Mrs. Ball's lawyer, was brief and to the point: a blunt, business-like offer to adopt and make an heiress of her. No mention was made of the marriage which was to be the condition, Mrs. Ball having taken her consent to this as much for granted as had Philip himself. No mention was made of him, and Letitia, forgetting him for the moment, sank back in her seat, lost in amazement and conjecture as to the motives that could have actuated Mrs. Ball. She did not for an instant flatter herself that affection for her was one of them. Mrs. Ball and she had had for each other the esteem that strength has for strength, but the nature of that quality in the two of them was far too different ever to allow of a kindly amalgamation. But if not affection, what then?

A movement of Philip brought her back from New York and Mrs. Ball to Paris and him. Here

was the reason of his coming, not affection for her either, nor any of the fine chivalry with whose seeming he had tricked her almost into liking him again. *His* ulterior motive was patent enough any way! She thrust the letter back into his hand.

"Take it back to Mrs. Ball!" she exclaimed, "and tell her she can't buy me."

He knew to what she referred, and he had the grace to blush, though at the same time he exclaimed: "Do you realise that you are refusing a princely fortune? She means to leave you all she has, and it's millions."

"I don't want her millions," replied Letitia sturdily. "Oh, do you think that money, any amount of money, could tempt me to live the life that you and Mrs. Ball live? Or make me content to be the wife of a man I could not love? I'd rather be a charwoman, earning my daily bread from day to day, down in the depths of *real* life. For it isn't real life that you live, you aren't real men and women. You don't really sin, or really repent, or even really love, except perhaps money. This woman here who offers it to me, the open sesame to all your doors, knows you and despises you, even as I despise you."

"Really!" cried Philip, forgetting himself in his anger. "You certainly are an exceptional person, Miss Berkeley. But you must acknowledge that, under the circumstances, Mrs. Ball and I—!"

"Are offering me a great deal more than I have any right to expect, of course you mean," she interrupted, rising haughtily. "Certainly a great deal

more than I could think of accepting even on honourable terms. I am sorry for Mrs. Ball. I have deeply regretted the trouble that my connection with her has brought upon her, but I do not count that my fault, and I cannot make restitution at the price she has set: the price of my liberty, my happiness, and my self-respect." With that she left him, passing swiftly away through the gathering dusk.

He did not follow her. Overcome with anger and dismay, he sat where he was till the signal drum for the closing of the gates aroused him. He was asking himself what he should do now. Debating within himself the advisability of confessing all to her, of throwing himself on her mercy. Hateful thought, thus to humble himself by begging a favour where he had thought to confer one! But then there was the worse humiliation in store for him were he to return unsuccessful to Mrs. Ball in her present relentless mood. Last, but not least, there was the money, the millions!—

Chance came to his aid in his dilemma. It met him on his return to his hotel:—a cablegram from Mrs. Ball's lawyer announced her sudden death.

She was gone, his ruthless enemy, so suddenly that everything was left unfinished behind her after all. The will she had had drawn up in Letitia's favour as a final bribe to Philip had not been signed, and her big fortune would have to go the way of the law—to a lot of poor collaterals she had climbed away from and despised because they had never even tried to climb too.

And yet, death had come kindly to Mrs. Ball, if abruptly, cutting her off as it did while her triumph still seemed sure and the taste of her revenge was still unspoiled by Letitia's obstinacy.

Death had come kindly too for the man she had humbled. Philip Euston's pride was indeed crushed within him, and forever. But the shameful secret of his birth was buried, and for ever, in the eternal silence of the tomb.

END OF PART I.

PART II

LETITIA BERKELEY, A. M., STUDIOSA MEDICINÆ

PART II

LETITIA BERKELEY, A.M., STUDIOSA MEDICINÆ

CHAPTER I

WITH SCALPEL AND PINCERS

THE dull grey light of a Paris December day percolated palely through the large ground glass windows of a dissecting pavilion in the École de Médecine. It was a long, high room, bare and business-like with its grim rows of dissecting tables. At one end was the entrance door, at the other the demonstrator's rostrum, beside which hung a mounted skeleton whose naked jaws seemed derisively a-grin at the scene before it.

The room was full of students. On every table lay a subject, and grouped about it were four or five medical tyros laying bare with scalpel and pincers the mechanism of life. Many of the men were smoking, and clouds of blue tobacco smoke thickened the air which was already heavy with the

fumes of disinfectants and the post-mortem stench they neutralised; one felt that that mal-odour was there though one could not detect it. Women were among these workers: students of both sexes and of many nations prosecuting their studies there together, all similarly clad in some sort of overall; and all alike eager, active, acquisitive; their warm living faces and lively movements in striking contrast with the ghastly colour and stern immobility of death.

That Presence which to the uninitiated is so awful, so subduing, impressed them not at all, and as their busy hands cut and probed into its details, their tongues wagged fast, laughter and snatches of song ringing out gaily again and again above the steady hum of conversation. The men were the noisier. Theirs were the songs often ribald, and theirs the loud laughter sounding oft the bestial note of the broad tale or vulgar jest. The women were generally grave, even sad. Russians most of them, and most of them intensely in earnest, though here and there a word, or glance, or an adroit manœuvre would betray the fact that even under such circumstances some women could coquet.

At the head of one of the tables, midway of the room, stood Letitia Berkeley, intent on the delicate and difficult operation of dissecting out the eye. She was covered like all the others from neck to heel in a plain cassock-like gown, but she had contrived to make it distinctive and becoming by an extra seam or two and a trim waist belt that

brought out the lines of her fine figure which, with her fair face and russet hair, gave a pleasant touch of beauty to the big gloomy room. She was not however thinking of these details or of the many glances they attracted her way, for she was an honest and thorough-going student, and the task in hand required all the concentration of which she was capable.

Four others were at the table with her, a woman and three men, engaged severally on the viscera and the limbs. They were a racially diverse group: Letitia's friend, Jadwiga Payeowska, was a Pole. Opposite her, dissecting the other arm of the cadaver, was Vladimir Ossinsky, a tall, dark, melancholy Russian. A Frenchman and a German Swiss completed the group, of whom only Jadwiga was disposed to be idle and loquacious.

She was a spirited little creature, pink-cheeked, blond, and scarcely five feet high, with the full round breast and pert aggressiveness of an English sparrow, which testy little flyer she also resembled in her readiness to ruffle up her feathers and peck and claw on the slightest provocation. Her plump figurine was laced to a degree that made her uncomfortable in bending over her work, which was undoubtedly one reason why she interrupted it so often to straighten up and look about her, noting everything that went on with her inquisitive blue eyes, and commenting on it *sotto voce* to Letitia—in German, that the Russian opposite, who detested the mere sound of the Teutonic tongue, might look

annoyed. She felt it to be her duty as a Pole to make herself as disagreeable as she could, in any way that she could, to each and all of the accursed race that had laid its galling yoke on her country's conquered neck.

But Letitia, who was untroubled by any race prejudices and kindly disposed toward all her fellow students, invariably spoke French, the language all could understand, and she would occasionally round up the restless, spiteful little Pole with a rebukeful, "*Allons*, Jadwiga, *au métier*." Whereat the others would smile provokingly, and Jadwiga would pout and probe away in silence for a time.

To-day, however, Letitia too paused at last for a moment's rest; throwing her shoulders back, and drawing a deep inspiration.

"You tired, mademoiselle?" asked the Russian, Ossinsky, in surprise, for she seldom flagged.

"Yes," she replied, returning his friendly smile, "dissecting is always a strain for me."

"A strain!" echoed the other two men, pausing also, glad of a moment's break.

"Not the work, but the surroundings," she explained. "I am enough of a layman still to find them revolting," and she glanced at a brutal, bacchanalian, graceless group of young Frenchmen who were their next neighbours on the right. "And I am still enough of a woman perhaps you will say," she continued smiling, "invariably to feel a personal interest in the subject under my hand. Whence came he? What was he? I find myself thinking.

What were the mischances or misdeeds that brought him to this lowly pass of desecrated death."

"*Mon Dieu, ce ne sont que des canailles!*" exclaimed her French co-worker, whom she and Jadwiga had put severely in his place and made a comparatively decent young gentleman of the first day they all gathered around the cadaver together. "The scum of our population," he went on, sticking his scalpel upright in the muscle he was dissecting and going around to stand between the two young women while he talked. "Born in a hospital and dying in one, it is often the only honest thing they have ever done, this tribute of their bodies to the state which brings them into the world and helps them out of it, free of charge. Whereas I, who am going to be scientifically of value to my country—" the young fellow was naïvely conceited—"had to pay for the privilege. My mother has often told me the sum my entrée into this world cost. I think that is why she wished me to study medicine. And when I die my heirs will be so much the poorer for my *comme il faut* commitment in Père Lachaise."

"Well, if your country appreciates you as you do yourself," said Jadwiga who had hardly been able to hear him out, "a public funeral à la Victor Hugo in the Panthéon may save your heirs that expense."

"Quite likely, mademoiselle. All things are possible—for a *man*," answered the Frenchman blandly, but with a malicious grin as he went back to his post at the foot of the table.

"Mademoiselle Berkeley, however, is right," inter-

posed the Swiss quickly—he was a peaceable fellow and always tried to head off the quarrels the firebrand Pole started daily with the Frenchman or Ossinsky—"dissecting *is* a strain, but I think it is because it is so baffling, forced as one is to seek in the dead organism the *modus operandi* of the living. It is like searching in the dark for that which only light, in this case the vital spark, can reveal. One feels oneself eternally baulked. Now if we could only vivisect this highest organism too, that were another thing."

"But it is the impossible thing," said Letitia, "that is going forever to block our way."

"Oh, I don't know about that," remarked Jadwiga calmly. "As society progresses, and men become more generally and thoroughly scientific, like Monsieur here, and less sentimental than you, *ma chère*, the state may be brought to dispose of its criminals in that way."

"Where's your Lombroso, mademoiselle?" asked Ossinsky, with his slight, melancholy smile.

"It is too much that he requires of the state," she replied, "that the criminal-born should be shut up and cared for as a moral invalid. It is too much of a burden to lay upon the sane. Consider for a moment the cost of even the present prison system; consider the expense involved in putting the condemned to death,—all sheer waste,—whereas disposed of as I suggest all this would be saved, and science, and through science, society, enormously the gainer."

"Unquestionably, and no doubt the prospect of vivisection would act as a powerful deterrent on those whose criminal propensities are of the benign type merely," said the Swiss, too scientific to dissent, theoretically, from the Pole's proposition.

"*Mon Dieu*, I should say so, I!" cried the Frenchman with a shrug of horror.

"Monsieur is perhaps inwardly conscious of how close the resemblance is between genius and crime," remarked Jadwiga with pointed malice.

The Frenchman looked angry, then he laughed. "If you advocate vivisection of your own kind, mademoiselle, I should not think you would make the fuss you do over Richet's dogs."

"Oh, that is quite another matter, the poor little beasts!" exclaimed Jadwiga, wincing in her turn at this reminder of the painful scenes in the physiological laboratory near by.

"There's one of them thrown back in the kennels now in awful shape," he continued wickedly. "I heard him howling as I came here and went to see: one side laid bare and one eye—"

"Ugh!" groaned Jadwiga, but it was Letitia's gesture of pity and distaste that made him stop.

The next moment the Pole's volatile attention had floated away from him to the door, which a stranger had just opened. He paused there, looking about the room till his glance found their group.

"That is he, Letitia!" she exclaimed excitedly, "that young man who has gazed at you so—"

Letitia checked her sternly, and, seizing her scalpel, resumed her dissecting, but in spite of her effort to disguise it there was a conscious look on her face, and her white hands were not as steady as usual at their task, as the visitor passed slowly up the room, his keen, grave gaze upon her. Approaching the demonstrator, whom apparently he had come to see, he stood in conversation with him some little time, but his eyes still sought Letitia out with an earnest, eager scrutiny, which she, though she did not once raise her head, bent as it was over her work, felt through and through.

"He is asking who you are," whispered Jadwiga, who was watching him in a way she had, her blue eyes flitting all around him, as if looking at everything in his vicinity save at him. This time, however, Letitia trod on her foot with an emphasis that she dared no more defy, and she was forced to suffer, without further comment, the young man to depart, which he presently did.

There were two lectures to be heard after the dissecting, then Letitia set out for home alone, an errand taking the Pole with whom she shared a small apartment, off in another direction; and with her, the Russian, Ossinsky, who usually walked home with them at this hour. The Frenchman was hanging around to go too, as he often did, but Letitia avoided him in her desire to be alone with her thoughts.

The short December day had long since deepened into night, but the Boulevard St. Michel, into which

she turned from the dark and narrow Rue de l'École de Médecine, was brilliant with innumerable lamps and with the broad sheets of light that spread down from the shop windows and cafés on the smooth asphalt pavement. Crowds of work-people and students were hurrying to their homes, while the public women and other denizens of the night—the sinister, sensual Paris night—were starting out to ply their nefarious trades, their loitering gait and questing gaze distinguishing them as by a brand of Cain from the daytime's hasting doers. Tramcars rolled along, loaded inside and out with tired human freight, the horses straining and tugging under the whips and cries of their drivers, and cabs and carriages sped in an endless swift procession past, bearing more fortunate ones more expeditiously toward home and dinner.

Through this sweep and rush of the great city's diurnal ebb, Letitia walked rapidly, unchallenged though observed, her handsome face and striking figure attracting many a glance, and bringing more than one man to a halt to stare after her. But it wanted not the leather *serviette* full of note-books and papers under her arm, and the case of dissecting instruments in her hand, to stamp her as a student in the eyes of the quick-witted Parisian, with whom the woman student passes for what she generally is, an earnest individual whose pursuit is an all-sufficient passport. Nowhere is the line more distinctly or more flatteringly drawn than in Paris between the woman who has a serious purpose in life and the

woman who has not. The portfolio of the student, the colour-box of the artist, the manner merely of the woman with work to do, are almost invariably recognised and respected by Frenchmen for all that they connote.

But, nevertheless, this evening Letitia was being followed, though she was not yet aware of it, and by the young man who had visited her pavilion that afternoon. It was of him, however, that she was thinking. She had not been able properly to fix her mind on the lectures she was coming from for the thought of him and the knowledge that he was sitting somewhere in the rows behind her, watching her intently—she would not look round to see where, and Jadwiga, still sulking over the snub she had got anent him in the pavilion, did not, as usual, tell her. Letitia was annoyed at herself and disturbed at finding herself again susceptible of such distraction.

It was nearly three years since she had rejected Philip Euston's offer of marriage, leaving Paris the same night for several months, sacrificing the whole last half of a semester to avoid further meeting with him. She never knew how unnecessary that move had been. It was nearly a year before she learned, through a casual reference in a New York newspaper to the late Mrs. Ball, of that doughty dame's decease; and she had already ascribed her failure to hear anything further from the latter's astounding proposal to make an heiress of her, to her flat refusal of handsome Philip. What the connection between him and Mrs. Ball might have been she did

not trouble herself to surmise. In fact she strove to forget the whole chapter of her life in which these two had figured, an effort which the lapse of time made ever more successful. Occasionally, however, handsome Philip especially would recur to her with startling vividness, or rather she would recur to herself as at that crucial time when he had been so much a part of her egoism ; and a flood of emotion would submerge her again :—regret, self-abasement, amazement at herself, and unreasonable rage at him. Then her cooler judgment would revive : once more would she plead her cause ; once more pronounce what seemed her self-acquittal ; and, restored to her accustomed calm, she would continue on her busy way with as light a heart as a woman of her character, with such an experience behind her, could carry. She had never since had any other feeling for a man than tranquil friendship. Her intellectual work had absorbed all her energy, all her interest, and only for those men whose similar pursuits threw them immediately in her way had she any thought at all, and her manner kept them, admiring indeed, but unimpassioned and remote. *La belle Minerve*, these fellow-students called her for her beauty, her ability, and her proud maidenly self-poise and reserve.

Within the last fortnight, however, she had found herself taking again a positive interest in a man, a man moreover whom she did not know. She only knew that he was an American, she could see that in his manner, in his way of looking at her, in the

cut of his fine, pale, scholarly face. It had come about suddenly, unexpectedly, this awakening of regard :— she had met him face to face one day as she was going into a lecture and the look he had given her held her own fascinated, and lingered with her afterwards to stir her blood with its searching scrutiny and its eager, instantaneous delight ;— a look that seemed to come from the depths of his nature and to reach to hers, bringing up to the surface much that she had not realised till then was there —thoughts of marriage, of congenial companionship, of love dear and intimate, of motherhood with its tender promise and splendid possibilities.—All was there complete in this woman whose first consciousness of sex had announced itself so violently, so carnally, to settle itself afterwards quietly into place while her energy and interest were absorbed in intellectual work. It rose within her now, her womanhood, intense yet calm in its consciousness of its own best and broadest meaning.

Just below where the Boulevard ends in the Carrefour de l'Observatoire, Letitia turned out of it to the right, passing the big bronze fountain with the prancing sea-horses that tops the *allée* leading up from the Luxembourg Gardens, the famous *allée* where the pink horse-chestnuts make such a beautiful show at their blossoming time in the spring. It was quiet, deserted here, and the step of the young man who was following her attracted her attention. Instinctively she recognised it and realised what was coming as he drew up to her side.

"Miss Berkeley," he said, hat in hand, "may I introduce myself to you? I am Dr. Robert Trux of New York."

She stopped short, and looked at him a moment, then as frankly and simply as he had spoken she replied: "Certainly; I am pleased to meet you, Dr. Trux;" and they walked on together toward her apartment in the Rue Notre Dame des Champs.

"I have tried to get myself introduced in the usual way," he explained, "but I have not been able to make sure even of your name till to-day, there in the pavilion—though I have martyred myself attending American festivities and American churches."

"The last places where you would find me," she remarked with a laugh.

"So I was pleased to discover," he replied. "I therefore resolved to present myself at the risk of a snub should you belie your appearance and prove to be conventional."

"Well, I am not conventional," she answered in her fearless way, "if by that you mean a stickler for forms, which are nothing to me unless what they stand for is something."

"Precisely my point of view," he said, well pleased. Then he changed the subject:—"You are going to take your degree here, I suppose, and return to America to practise?"

"I shall take my degree next year, but as to the rest I have not yet decided." Her face clouded, for the raising of this question always brought the bitter thought, the galling dread of what might hap-

pen should she return to America, to New York—the best place for her—to practise ;—exposure, defeat, ruin perhaps, because of a fault done with and deeply repented.

"You already have your degree?" she continued interrogatively, adding inwardly, "and if there is anything like that behind *you*, being a man, you need not fear it."

"Yes," he was replying, "three years ago. I have just come from Vienna, where I have been working at my specialty with Meynert, and now I am here to study under Charcot."

"I am going to make nervous diseases my specialty too," she said. "I go on at the Salpêtrière next week."

They looked at each other consciously: here was another bond. It was a relief to be able to change the subject as she did just then abruptly, by saying, as they reached her door:

"I can't ask you in, it's against the rules."

He looked surprised, and she explained:—

"My little friend and I live alone, *en garçon*, and we don't allow visits from men."

"I think I might be an exception," said he in his strong, masculine way.

She liked that way of his; she liked him; but she stood in the doorway, blocking it unbendingly, though she smiled—a smile that rippled into a laugh, and might have sunk into a sob had she given her emotions their way. She restrained them, however, and parried with him gaily:—"And why you?"

"Well, because I am an American."

"That wouldn't be any reason at all for my Polish friend, *par exemple*."

"Shall I give you a better one to give her?" he asked promptly, looking straight into her eyes.

"No," she exclaimed, retreating a step or two in a sudden womanish shrinking from his masculine pursuit. "It wouldn't help you a bit," she added, recovering herself.

"We shall see," he said, masterfully.

"What we shall see," she replied with her foot on the stair, half mocking him and half tempting.

In a way it was challenge and defiance. As if they realised this, they stood for a moment looking steadily at each other, taking each other's measure in the dim light of the hallway. Then he uncovered:

"But I may see you again? know you?"

"Certainly," she replied, responding to him frankly again, with outstretched hand. "And with pleasure, *confrère*. *Au revoir!*"

"*Au revoir!*" he repeated, gravely echoing her French over their hearty Anglo-Saxon hand-clasp.

Its touch went with her to her rooms; lingered with her all the evening; a firm and virile promise of pleasant days to come.

CHAPTER II

A MAKESHIFT MÉNAGE

LETITIA and her Polish friend Jadwiga were circumstanced alike, both obliged to live cheaply. counting each sou they spent. They hired by the year a small apartment on the top floor of a house in this narrow quiet street on the outskirts of the Latin Quarter. It was a congenial, Bohemian neighbourhood. In the same house with them and throughout that vicinity lived students like themselves, and artists, for there were numerous studios and two or three art schools close at hand as well as several other educational establishments, and a number of the big Paris hospitals.

Their apartment, which consisted of four rooms—a bedroom each, a kitchen, and a small salon—was plain and bare. They had bought their furniture themselves, picking it up here and there as they could: cane-bottomed chairs, a second-hand sofa, and a table in the salon; cot-beds and a chair apiece in their bedrooms. Letitia had a washstand too, in hers; but Jadwiga, who was not so particular in her

personal habits, saved this expense by performing her irregular ablutions in the kitchen sink. They had no carpets, no rugs, no little knick-knacks or elegancies of any kind; curtains only in the salon, and there, too, in cold weather, a grate fire, their only luxury and their only heat. This Letitia insisted on, though Jadwiga considered it an extravagance, advocating one of the portable charcoal stoves with which Parisians asphyxiate themselves every now and then. But to this Letitia would not consent, nor would she have any of those absurd little bricks of compressed coal dust, perforated with holes, that so often compose the economical Frenchman's apology for a fire. One concession, however, she did make: they bought their fuel themselves, bringing it in by the bagful after dark, to save being cheated as would have been the case had they employed a middleman or woman to get it for them. As they were out all day they had this precious fire only in the evening.

The remains of the previous night's cheerful blaze were still warm upon the hearth when, about seven thirty o'clock of the morning after her meeting with Dr. Trux, Letitia emerged from her bedroom, fresh and rosy with the invigoration of her cold bath, and neatly attired for the day. She still wore black, though the period of mourning for her father was over long ago. But it was cheaper than colours, since variety was not needed; less conspicuous, and more becoming, a consideration worth entertaining

even for a woman who was too genuinely handsome to be vain.

She knocked an imperative reveille on Jadwiga's door, and then proceeded, with what the little Pole called her frightful morning energy, to prepare their one table for breakfast; removing the lamp to the mantel, and the books they had been reading the night before back to their places on the set of shelves against the wall: Lombroso's "*L'Homme Criminel*," which Jadwiga had been looking into again as a result of the conversation in the pavilion; a work on the auscultation of the heart, that young lady's last "pony"; a new treatise on diseases of the brain, upon which she herself had tried to fix her thoughts, which, nevertheless, had persistently run off to Dr. Trux and the possibilities acquaintance with him might make realities. As she took up the book now she thought of him again—in fact, she been thinking of him ever since she had wakened from dreaming of him—and she paused on her way to the shelves with it, to look into the mirror over the mantel, as if for sympathy in her own reflected face.

The tablecloth she spread was a dark one, blue and red—they could not afford the luxury of snowy linen for their table. Then she laid a plate, a cup and saucer, a little egg-cup, a knife and spoon for each; set a small jug of cream, a small bowl of sugar, a square of butter and a fancy wicker basket containing four fresh rolls in place, and all was

ready for the coffee and eggs that were cooking over tin spirit-lamps in the kitchen.

As she passed to and fro in these simple preparations, which she made with the quick dexterity of long habit, she knocked frequently and each time louder on Jadwiga's door without, however, eliciting any response. And finally, having brought in the coffee and eggs, she entered the silent chamber with determined air, and, casting an irritated yet amused glance at the little figure curled up like a kitten under the feather covering—much too short—of the bed, made as if to open the window. But a shriek of dismay restrained her, and Jadwiga unrolled herself to sit up in bed.

"You would *freeze* me for the entire day!" she cried half angrily.

"Well, the air in this room is enough to poison you for the entire day," replied Letitia sharply. "It is positively fetid. Faugh!" and she went out, closing the door tightly behind her to prevent the atmosphere she objected to from following her.

A few minutes later Jadwiga joined her at the breakfast table, a slovenly peignoir over her dark coloured night-gown, her blond bang still in curl-papers, her boots unbuttoned and flapping about her heels as she shuffled into the room. She was a lazy, slack little creature, fond of lying abed and averse to water and air. Letitia's morning indulgence in both amazed and enraged her; for the

vigorous girl, after her cold bath, would throw open the windows to fill her lungs and the apartment with fresh, pure air.

"Not satisfied with sleeping with them open all night and forcing me to shut myself up in my room, to avoid congealing in my bed," the chilly Pole—Letitia called her the North Pole because she was always so cold—had long ago complained.

"Heaven designed you for an old maid," she said now, not knowing how otherwise to voice her resentment at the contrast she was sensitive enough to perceive between Letitia and herself in the morning. "No man would ever endure your matutinal ways."

Letitia was sufficiently magnanimous not to reply, but she smiled mysteriously, provokingly. She was thinking of Dr. Trux. She had not yet told Jadwiga about her meeting with him. She dreaded doing it, she found; dreaded the remarks of her friend and the view she might take of it. Theoretically a free-thinker, a socialist with anarchist leanings, an advocate of free-love, and of the largest possible individual liberty, actually this little Polish noblewoman was circumspect, conservative, and scrupulously exact in her observance of conventional forms. She was constantly reading works on socialism, attending anarchist meetings at the risk of arrest, and talking about a simplified social structure based on the equality and natural intercourse of the sexes,

but let any man so much as look as if he would approach her in any but the most properly conventional way, and all her aristocratic, belligerent Polish blood was ablaze with indignation at once. Both Letitia and she had, moreover, taken a high stand as to the proprieties for women in their position, and had conducted themselves accordingly, mercilessly snubbing any attempt at gallantry or flirtation. It was not easy therefore, to confess this somewhat flagrant deviation from their rule, for Jadwiga might not perceive as she did the exceptional nature of the circumstances. But there was no help for it, better tell than leave her to find out, just as she had immediately found out that the young man was attracted.

"By the way, Jadwiga," she said presently, trying to look as if what she had to say was of no particular importance, "I met the American last night. His name is Robert Trux, Dr. Trux—he already has his degree."

"You did!" exclaimed Jadwiga, surprised and excited. "Who introduced you?"

A moment Letitia hesitated, then she replied, "Himself," and she explained.

"*Mais, à la bonne heure! C'est bien, ça; tout à fait à la nature!*" cried Jadwiga approvingly in her fluent French. She spoke half a dozen languages with equal ease, and had a way with Letitia, who was a pretty good linguist too, of dropping

into one or the other and often from one to the other according to the sentiments she had to express. "That is the way for man and woman to meet, approaching each other in their own way and at their own time without the intervention of any form."

She was silent after that, other thoughts coming to her, envy paramount. She had been in Paris, the city of such adventures, longer than Letitia, and no man had ever approached her thus, singling her out and pursuing her with such insistence. Yet she wanted friendship, admiration, love from men, she too, though she did pretend that she did not. Letitia might have had that sort of tribute right along, the men were always staring at her in the clinics and lectures. She had seen for three years one and another caught at the first sight of her friend's handsome, fair, serious face, where intellect and beauty were so finely blended; had seen them glance, then gaze and next day perhaps move nearer, and then, as soon as they could, get themselves introduced only to be relegated to the ranks of their object's indifferent and chillingly general regard. She remembered every one of them, she always thereafter took a resentful, grudging interest in them, which, however, she kept carefully to herself; she who saw everything and seemed never to be seen. Was it because she was so small? she wondered, and her nose so ugly? The Payeowskas were all small, but they were noble; they had patriots and courtiers

behind them, while this *Américaine*, what was she but a parvenue without ancestors, though her manners were good, and her reserve and self-poise quite aristocratic. She had feared all along that Letitia would sometime respond and here she was doing so, looking conscious and happy at the thought of a man. She might even marry him, and not have to bother any more about medicine in the provided-for dignity of wedded life.

Jadwiga's ideas moved rapidly: she had thought all this in a scarcely perceptible pause.

"I suppose it will be all right," she said aloud. "As he is an American, he may not misconstrue your permitting——"

"*Misconstrue!*" interrupted Letitia in disgust. "Good Heavens, Jadwiga, what a banal thing for you to say! You who at least *pretend* to hold with me that the individual should decide for himself in any given case, regardless of conventional rules. Circumstances——"

"Circumstances are what we choose to regard them," interrupted Jadwiga in her turn, ambiguously. Then she swallowed her coffee quickly, and jumping up, shuffled back to her room and locked herself in.

Letitia stared at the closed door in blank amazement till an inkling of Jadwiga's feelings stole over her. Then she laughed softly to herself, her white teeth flashing out and her eyes glancing triumph.

Hélas, La Belle Minerve was only a woman, and a very human woman after all! And perhaps the most aggravating housemate that ever anybody hated and yet liked was precisely this Jadwiga Payeowska.

CHAPTER III

A CLINIC AT THE SALPÊTRIÈRE

It was the morning for the clinic on nervous diseases at the Salpêtrière. "*Ce grand emporium des misères humaines*," as Charcot himself once named it, did not begin till ten o'clock, but when Letitia, after a brisk walk along the boulevards leading thither, reached the gate shortly after nine, others also were hurrying in to secure good places toward the front. Among these early arrivals was Dr. Trux, who was waiting outside the gate—for her, Letitia could not but infer, since he joined her forthwith and went in with her across the big courts to the clinic.

They looked at each other eagerly in the broad morning light, and with mutual approval. He was not indeed handsome as she was, in the ordinary physical sense: his figure was no taller than her own and slight, his face angular-featured and pale; but energy, intellect, and culture had stamped their fine impress upon it, and his eyes were beautiful, darkly luminous, apperceptive, and profound.

"Aren't you going to appear behind the footlights

this morning?" she asked lightly, when, instead of leaving her at the door, he went in and seated himself beside her in the front row of seats before the rostrum, which was raised above and filled in one end of the long room like a stage.

"No, I thought I would get the effect from the audience to-day," he answered, smiling. "Next week you will be entitled to a seat up there, too, *n'est-ce pas?*"

She nodded an affirmative, and then looked away from him in sudden, pleased confusion at his evident intention to make this hospital work a means to further their acquaintance.

The platform was set with a double row of chairs for the staff and assistants, and in front, to the left, an arm-chair and table for the chief. Opposite his place, to the right of the platform, was a blackboard with the scheme of the morning's lecture: Hysteria, Double Personality, Hypnotism, with a long list of sub-heads—the *leçon* was to be particularly interesting in its attempts to sound the deep mystery of the human mind by means of its manifestations in disease. Letitia's eyes kindled with anticipation as she copied the scheme into her notebook.

This done, she turned again to Dr. Trux. He was looking attentively, and with the eyes of a connoisseur, at a large picture which hung at the back of the platform, and which represented Dr. Pinel, who first introduced into this great hospital a merci-

ful and scientific treatment of the insane, bringing relief to the unhappy victims of the barbarous methods he abolished; the artist having summed up in one picturesque and dramatic situation the long years' noble work.

"I like that picture," said Dr. Trux when he found that her attention was with him again. "And especially I like it here where those to whom it particularly appeals can see it, and so, perhaps, find incentive to some equally immortalising achievement. How it elevates, too, idealises, relieves these material and melancholy surroundings!"

"Yes," she assented, "I like it, the subject of it, that is: science relieving the victims of ignorance. But I don't like the treatment, precisely because it is too ideal. It doesn't need Charcot to tell us, though he did only last week, that the insane are never beautiful. Yet that dishevelled girl with her gown half off—"

"To show her figure," interjected Dr. Trux. "And the flesh tints *are* very good."

"Dominates the foreground with her beauty," continued Letitia with a frown at his interruption, "to the disadvantage of the principal figure, *le Docteur* Pinel himself. Indeed one suspects that for the artist she *was* the principal figure."

"I should think she would have been," he said with a laugh. "It's the artistic touch, Miss Berkeley, the element of beauty which the artist introduces wherever he can in the form of woman."

He evidently sympathised with the artist in this particular, and without stopping to think why this should irritate her, she answered warmly, "It's their eternal, obtrusive insistence on that, especially here in Paris, which at times disgusts me utterly with art."

"You would paralyse it, however, were you to take the woman out of it," he returned. "The plastic artist certainly has reason to say with Goethe, '*Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan.*'"

"Ah, but Goethe meant the abstract, the essential Feminine," she responded quickly. "Not the mere brute female of form and colour, the soulless and sensual model, that the artist makes a carnal fetish of. The real woman, of to-day at least, is something more than these mere accidents, I assure you," and she flashed a rebuke at him out of her fine eyes, for the personal, physical admiration of her that his glance was showing.

"Not that way shall this acquaintance go," she was saying sternly to herself. "Not that way. It shall begin with the mind, be of the mind, or it shall not be at all." And she turned away from him coldly, back to her notes, to fill in carefully the scheme which she had copied more hastily than her wont in her desire to talk with him.

Meantime the room had been filling up with auditors; most of them men, and many of these evidently just out of bed after insufficient sleep due to a night's debauch—unshaven, ill-dressed, ill-

smelling. The average French student is neither a neat nor a cleanly person, and his execrable custom of wearing the formal high hat with any sort of suit, stale linen, and a dirty tie, gives him an even more slovenly appearance than would some sort of head-gear more in keeping with the rest of his attire. These hats are usually kept on the head in the medical lectures though the politer students remove them, but at the clinics they are always taken off when the professor enters, to be held in the hand or between the feet, a source of distraction to the wearer and of annoyance to his neighbours.

The audience at this famous clinic was not exclusively of the medical profession: artists and literati too were there, and a goodly number of that amusing, heterogeneous, general public that one sees at even the most special of the Paris lectures. The slam-bang of hurried arrival, the shoving of chairs, the buzz of conversation in various languages, the rustle of newspapers, and the humming of songs heard the night before in the *cafés-chantant*, filled the room with a motley din which reduced to almost perfect privacy the tête-à-tête that generally went on where male and female student sat together.

But the noise dropped abruptly into an expectant silence as the professor's arrival in the ante-room made itself felt out to the farthest corner of the auditorium; then it rose again into a salvo of applause when he entered, followed by his staff of assistants and students. A picturesque procession,

despite its conventionally correct attire, for the *clinique*, you must know, is the parade day of hospital week and the women make themselves as pretty as circumstances admit, and the men, too, remember that they are to sit within the circle of the cynosure. He in this instance was unconventional enough, *Dieu merci!* His *chef de clinique* looked fit for a wedding in a faultless morning-suit, but the *maître* himself wore a loose, short sack coat that hung carelessly about his stout and stooping frame; and a black skull-cap defended comfortably against the draughts of this amphitheatre his massive white-haired head, while the strong old face thrown out in bold relief beneath it had that in it to stir the pulse of every heart before it, and to set the artists sketching in delight.

"Ah, he is great!" murmured Dr. Trux in admiration, while Letitia's eyes glistened with the fine emotion this fine personality always gave her. There was more to be learned for such as they from such a teacher than mere diseases of the brain: the lesson of a life itself; the splendid and pathetic lesson of success.

"*Ce pauvre garçon*," Letitia had heard him say on a previous occasion, in reference to a patient, an unfortunate young workman whom he had sent out of the room after showing him to the audience and diagnosing in him for their benefit, a particularly obscure and fatal nervous disease, "*Ce pauvre garçon* is doomed, *messieurs*. I cannot save him,

medical science cannot save him—at least not yet. I know his dreadful malady with the acquaintance of many years. I can foresee its entire course; I can prognose each fatal symptom, and the order of its advent; I can forecast for him almost the very hour of his death, but I cannot avert one step of its hideous approach. I can tell him what he has, but I cannot cure him. *Voilà, messieurs, le travail de ma vie!*"

To-day, however, the professor was in a more cheerful mood, and settling comfortably back into his chair he proceeded to unfold in an easy, conversational tone, the characteristics of hysteria, its many and strange symptoms, its prodromes and its prognosis with the application of hypnotism to the investigation of it, and to its cure. Then the cases illustrative of the lecture were brought in, each one being preceded by its "history," which embraced not only the most intimate details of the individual's life, but also as much as it had been possible to get of his or her heredity. For the modern clinic is more searching than the Roman Catholic confessional; and it shows with appalling proof that the old Mosaic theory of divine retribution is no more than nature's relentless law, which visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, and beyond that even unto the extinction of the line.

Young and old, men and women, were brought in; some to illustrate one point, some another of the

lecture. Many had been in this hospital for years, veterans of this clinic, who went through their accustomed rôles with the automatic proficiency of long practice. Others again, were new and young, for the army of disease doth never lack recruits. There were demonstrations of the Grand Hypnotism—classic in this place—with its three stages of lethargy, catalepsy, and noctambulism. Some famous *hypnotisables* were used, patients in this hospital and plastic as clay in the manipulator's hands; passing at his will from the quiescence of suggested sleep, to the active state, when at his bidding they would pluck flowers from the barren floor, or fondle imaginary babies in their arms.

Maître Charcot was a magician in his way—of the kind good orthodox inquisitors used to burn. As the last of his subjects was leaving the stage, he struck with his test hammer on another bit of metal at his hand, a sharp and sudden blow, and instantly the woman stopped in her tracks, one foot raised for the forward step she had been about to take, her hands thrown out in terror, her startled glance thrown backward over her shoulder, her face expressive of affright—rigid, motionless as if turned to stone:—the sharp and sudden sound had thrown her into a cataleptic trance.

"*La femme de Lot*," said the professor briefly but suggestively, and with a burst of laughter and applause the clinic was at an end.

"A *genialer Geist*," remarked Dr. Trux, as he

and Letitia walked away together. "They do things with a style, these Frenchmen, an epigrammatic finish that seems to come to them along with their elegant tongue."

"Yes," she replied, "and Charcot has it to an unusual degree. I always feel when I come away from his clinic as if I had been looking on some finished work of art."

"Or artifice, even," suggested the young doctor—he was a bit of a cynic in his way, too, was this new student of the master's.

"Our great man is a French man," she answered smiling, but the next moment adding earnestly: "Besides, one who has looked so deep into the mystery of life must needs savour somewhat of the occult."

"Oh, don't think I am trying to underrate your professor, Miss Berkeley," replied the doctor quickly. "On the contrary, he is a power. One to make one feel that the profession is, after all, worth while. Pity he's so old—and apoplectic," he added, with a dash of cynicism again.

"Ah, but we shall take up his work and carry it on after him," she answered promptly and proudly.

"One must be unenthusiastic indeed not to resolve it," said her companion with grave sympathy. "Particularly if one has gone into medicine in the hope of doing something with it as a science rather than an art."

"So that is your purpose?"

"And yours?" he asked in his turn.

"Primarily because I have always had a special predilection for it, as a means to knowing life, to knowing men and women, inside and out."

"And mental diseases?" he persisted.

"Are the pathological phenomena of mind, which in itself is the sum and substance of life. Then too the brain is so interesting, so complex, so little known. It appeals to one's imagination, lures one on, as the new world lured Columbus."

"Yes, and there are discoveries to be made there as great as his," he agreed.

"Moreover, I am ambitious," she continued. "I want to succeed, intellectually and materially, and I think medicine offers women the best chance for success of any of the higher professions, as yet. I want to *do* something; I want to *be* something; I want my face to be lined with some of the character that makes Maître Charcot's so impressive. It must be glorious to feel within oneself what he looks!"

Dr. Trux was regarding her attentively, gravely. He was not altogether pleased; she was too thoroughly egoistic. Yet he also held life to be the individual's opportunity for self-development and self-advance. But somehow—in a woman—then he took himself inwardly to task for his conventionality that would expect a difference in motive because of a difference in sex.

"What's the next thing on your programme?"

he asked when they had walked back to Boule Mich.

"*Déjeûner.*"

"May I come too?"

"Delighted to have you," and she led the way to a neat and quiet Bouillon not far from the Carrefour, which she usually patronised.

"So it is life you are after," he resumed after a long détour into other topics which had lasted nearly through the meal.

"The knowledge of it, yes."

"*C'est la même chose.* 'Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum.' You remember Mephisto's advice to the scholar?"—and he smiled enjoyingly as the cynical scene rose before him. "The best way to know life is to live it to the full."

"For a man, yes. He *can* live it."

"And can't a woman, too?"

"No; not as a man can, at any rate. Women are too heavily hampered by their sex, or rather by what their sex is made to be. The social code lays so many restrictions upon them that there are very few women who are individuals at all, very few, therefore, who live, in the true sense of the word. It takes more moral courage than most women have for a woman to be quite frankly what she really is, or would like to be."

"Well, it's their own fault that they are so repressed," he replied somewhat contemptuously. "It is women who especially insist on the social

code, as you call it—who oppose most strenuously any changes in it."

"True," she answered. Then, after a pause, during which she had sat with thoughtful brows, she added: "But take, for instance, a woman who, in living out herself, has—erred, as society in charitable mood would call it." She had begun with heightened colour, but she was pale by the time she came to finish thus: "Are men really any more tolerant of her than are women?"

"Oh, the position of both men and women on that subject is absurdly ignorant and unjust. Ignorant of the great facts of nature, the tremendous forces that operate through sex; and unjust in regarding differently the manifestations of these forces in the male and in the female. Ignorant and unjust in making primarily a moral question what is primarily a physiological one."

"Then you would judge the woman's act?" she exclaimed, still intent, like a very woman, on the particular amid his generalisations that concerned her most.

"Precisely as I should the man's," he answered promptly. "Or rather I should not presume to judge at all, it being a matter for a woman to settle with her own personality as a man settles it with his."

"He is just," she exclaimed within herself, rapturously. "He is wise. He would understand!" And she was tempted to present her own case to

him supposititiously, and get his opinion on it then and there. But her courage failed her: he had spoken so impersonally, so remotely, in the tone of one advancing views of general import only. He even looked at her now with a deprecating smile and a slight, deferential gesture that would say as much, which sent her sudden impulse back to hide behind her habitual reserve.

CHAPTER IV

ROMANCE AND MEDICINE

THAT morning together was but the beginning of a long series which was promptly resumed with the next week and Letitia's entrance upon her duties as externe at the Salpêtrière. They had seen each other daily in the interim, but thereafter their meetings were on the familiar footing of co-workers, keeping the same hours in the same place. Generally he would join her for the walk out to the hospital that began the morning; afterwards they would meet again, in its courts, in its clinics, in its wards. And regularly they would wind up with *déjeûner* together in some restaurant—*déjeûner* and a long talk that was always a stimulus to her, and more or less of a revelation to him.

He had not before met a woman of her stamp. He had not had much to do with women of any stamp, though he had acquired his man's experience in his man's way. But this had not seriously biased his opinion of the sex, nor had it prevented him from forming for himself a fine ideal of what a woman,

a modern woman, might be; endowed with all the ability that equal opportunity and equal activity with men could give her, yet keeping the best of her sex characteristics unchanged except as they would necessarily be enlarged by the general enlargement of her functions. Such a woman Letitia had seemed to him to be at the first sight he had of her, the very day of his arrival in Paris, and he had spent most of the next fortnight following her about and studying her in this connection. His method was scientific—observation and experiment; he observed her first, then he made her acquaintance.

Before ten days were over they were confidential friends, if that can be called friendship which has in it from its inception the germ of a stronger attachment.

Of all this Jadwiga knew nothing, for her hospital duties took her off daily to the far other side of Paris, whence she never got back till after Letitia was already at the regular afternoon work on the cadaver in the dissecting-room. She thus had no opportunity to find out for herself; and Letitia, resenting her behaviour of that first morning when there had been something to confess in regard to Dr. Trux, and her manner since, made no further reference to him. Nevertheless Jadwiga, envious and jealous, suspected something of what was going on—Letitia's cheeks were often flushed, and there was a certain exhilaration and unconscious self-gratulation in her bearing that could mean but one thing and that

a man, to this lynx-eyed little woman observer. But after being as disagreeable as she dared for as long as she could—silent, much given to shrugging of the shoulders and lifting of the eyebrows, late every morning for coffee and irregular at dinner, which they had mutually agreed to make their convivial hour of the day, she grew tired of a rôle that seemed to produce so little effect, for Letitia knew how to be aggravating, too, in her way.

"How do you like Dr. Trux on further acquaintance?" she asked finally, as they were returning home together one evening from their last lecture. "Ossinsky told me he saw you at *déjeûner* with him this noon."

Letitia was already mollified by various signs she had seen of her friend's desire to resume amicable relations—Jadwiga had risen of her own accord early that morning and prepared the coffee, an exceptional concession. She accordingly met her present advance with responsive amity, answering her with sufficient frankness and detail to take the edge off her curiosity and thus complete her restoration to her usual talkative, sociable self. Furthermore next day she asked Dr. Trux to join them at dinner that evening.

"I want you to meet my friend Jadwiga Payeowska," she explained. "And I will ask that Russian I have told you of, Vladimir Ossinsky. He is a pessimist, an anarchist, and highly interesting as a type. My friend Jadwiga says one ought to con-

fine one's acquaintance exclusively to types for the sake of economising one's time. She is rabid on the subject of economy," she added, smiling as she thought of the black underclothes Jadwiga wore to save washing.

Dr. Trux of course agreed to come. Indeed he had rather wondered why he had not been asked before, and had even twice gone so far as to follow the two girls to the restaurant where they dined, with the idea of accidentally happening in there too. This, however, he had not quite dared to do. Though by no means timid, he stood sufficiently in awe of Letitia to prefer that this extension of their intercourse should come from her. But he was already where he wanted to share her whole day, and to make her friends his.

"We will go to the theatre afterwards," he said expansively. "I will get a loge at the Comédie, and you must ask the others to be my guests. It is the Œdipus to-night and Mounet Sully is said to be superb.—Nonsense, of course, you have time," he added, as she demurred. "Don't make the fatal mistake of letting your *Fach* swallow you up. Besides the stage is one of the very best aids to what you aim at—the study of life—the stage that is as the French and Germans have it, representing adequately their national life and general level of culture."

"Then you do not think ours does?"

"I should be sorry to say yes," he replied.

"I have not had much opportunity to study our stage," she went on, a shadow on her face as she thought of the one winter when she had gone to the theatre and with whom! "I have had the impression, however, that the stage like the newspaper gives what the public wants and in so far is representative."

"That is the plea their apologists advance," he replied, "but I think it is the plea of guilt. The stage should lead public taste, not follow it. It must make concessions, yes, but it should exact them, too. It should be, it might be, an immense educational factor with us, seizing the salient points of our national life, and representing them faithfully, realistically, as a warning or an incentive, *je nachdem*. As for the newspapers, their duty is plain. The public anywhere is like a flock of sheep, following blindly the bell-wether's lead. On the bell-wether rests the burden of responsibility for the wanderings of the flock."

Whatever rancour lingered in Jadwiga's breast vanished quite at the prospect of the pleasure Letitia had to announce, when they met later in the pavilion. Her face beamed with delight and she worked diligently the whole afternoon, without once making a spiteful or teasing remark, though the provocation was almost irresistible when the Frenchman, in much the same spirit in which the matador waves his red flag at the bull, called her attention to a stunning new tie he was wearing. She surprised

the others no less than him by telling him amiably that it was handsome and becoming, though in reality it was neither. To her vis-à-vis Ossinsky she was positively kind, reading out to him from Letitia's *Anatomie* while he probed and cut, the description of the muscle he was tracing.

Poor little Jadwiga! but few pleasures had come into her life, and much sorrow. Her mother, dead under most unhappy circumstances. Her father married to his servant, while she herself, with the tastes of a gentlewoman and a disinclination to work, was turned adrift in Paris with scarcely money enough to prepare herself for a profession she did not much care for, in order that she might support herself, which she did not want to do. A dinner with some young men, and a box-party afterwards at the Comédie was indeed an oasis in this waste of work-a-day routine of which she was so weary.

She wanted Letitia to cut the last lecture so that they might have ample time to dress and get over to the Duval restaurant in the Rue Montesquieu, where they had arranged to dine as being convenient to the theatre. But Letitia adhered to the regular programme with Spartan firmness.

"I'm awfully glad I bought that silk waist at the Bon Marché the other day, though I did grudge the money," said Jadwiga when they were home at last and dressing. "It will make me at least fairly presentable. Sitting down, in a box, only one's waist is seen. We ought, however, to be *en grande*

tenue for a field-night at the Comédie, décolleté or at least square neck." She was making her toilet in the salon, having no glass in her own room, and as she spoke she mounted a chair to look at herself in the mirror over the mantel, being too short to get a satisfactory view from the floor. She had taken off her cloth waist and had not yet donned the silk.

"I could go low-necked very well," she continued, pushing back her black undergarments. "My neck is unusually good for my size—clavicles well covered, scapulæ flat, throat—" turning her blond head from side to side—"*passable*. Did you ever go décolleté?" she asked of Letitia who had just emerged from her bedroom for a little chat while trimming her nails.

Into Letitia's face the colour surged at the question.

"Yes, once," she answered huskily, retreating to her own room again, stung by this sudden reminder of the first and only time she had worn a low-cut dress, for Philip Euston to admire her bare neck and kiss it passionately in the back room at Mrs. Ball's. What would Robert Trux say if he knew that? *Would* he understand and excuse it as she did herself, except when, as now, a keen regret for it cut her conscience to the quick? Oh, was it always to be so? this perpetual intrusion of the past she abjured into the present she would make so different! So different! Ah, why need she ever

think of it at all? that past that was done with, utterly, absolutely, and forevermore!—

"You look pale," said Dr. Trux to her solicitously when they met at the restaurant.

"We had to hurry so to get here on time," she replied evasively.

The dinner did not go very well at first. There was the awkwardness of strange elements that threatened not to combine. Dr. Trux seated himself beside Jadwiga in order the better to see Letitia, who had Ossinsky on her right.

But Jadwiga kept his attention turned to herself by a series of questions: How long since he had taken his degree? Had he been abroad ever since, and what for? Three years in Germany and Austria for general culture and nervous diseases! Ah! that was his specialty *too!* and she darted a glance at Letitia that made the latter blush, though she was apparently devoting her whole attention to an attempt to draw Ossinsky out of his customary gloom—Ossinsky, looking unusually well to-night in a dress suit and without the red necktie he generally wore as a badge of his revolutionary ideas.

"There is no need to go to the theatre for tragedy," he was saying, à propos of the play they were about to see. "There is tragedy enough all about us, within ourselves. Life itself is an awful tragedy."

"Not always," said Dr. Trux cheerfully. "Sometimes it is only a farce, more often merely a comedy;

seldom at most more than a tragi-comedy with more of the humorous than the terrible about it."

"Not with us! not with us!" exclaimed the Russian out of his egoism. "Life with us is always a tragedy; cruel, Medusa-faced, with ringlets of snaky fear and gaze that turns to stone."

This petrified in a way the spirits of the party, and their smiles vanished as Dr. Trux said gravely:

"True, one should always except Russia when generalising like that. Life there is indeed tragical, your countrymen are martyrs, but—pardon me for saying it—I think they deserve to suffer so long as they suffer themselves to be made to suffer."

"They deserve to suffer for other reasons than that!" exclaimed Jadwiga, forgetting her new kindliness for her Russian convive in her feelings as a Pole. "Russians ruined my country, murdered my people, are trampling now upon our rights. They do indeed deserve to suffer, they will suffer! It is retribution!"

Ossinsky looked at her with angry eyes, resenting as a Russian these strictures on his country, till his feeling as an anarchist against all government and all possession whatever re-asserted itself, and he gave a sigh of assent.

Letitia tried to bring the conversation back into the safer region of metaphysics: "I think we are all of us prone to give life in general our own particular colouring. It is largely a subjective phenomenon."

"Of course it is," said Jadwiga, not yet entirely appeased, "a mere question of blood or bile. If one has red corpuscles enough to make one normal one sees life as one should," and she looked pointedly at Ossinsky's bilious, sallow face.

Dr. Trux hastily ordered another bottle of wine as a diversion, and after it had passed about among them the dinner at last took on a more convivial tone.

CHAPTER V

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

A VISIT to the Comédie Française is always an event for a lover of the drama. The history of this theatre, its dignified and official position, and the certainty one has that what is presented to one here will be as well done as dramatic talent, dramatic skill, and a perfectly adjusted dramatic organization can do it, give a comfortable consciousness of a *ne plus ultra* finally attained.

It was with such a consciousness, and its consequent readiness to appreciate and to enjoy, that three at least of the four young people who, despite their several preoccupations of passion, repentance, perversity, and pessimism, had been dining with the zest and appetite of youth at the restaurant Duval in the Rue Montesquieu, entered the Théâtre Français. And indeed even Ossinsky's melancholy face was unwontedly cheerful as he followed the young women into the box the Doctor, as host of the occasion, had secured.

"This is as it should be," whispered Jadwiga to Letitia, in the stir of taking seats, and she cast a

glance of disdain up at the gallery where they would have had to sit along with the rabble had they come at their own expense. They seldom went to the theatre, she and Letitia, but when they did it was under such vulgar circumstances, hence there was solid satisfaction in thus for once attending the Français in a manner so *comme il faut*. To be sure they ought to have a chaperone for the looks of things, and they ought not to have on those horrid black wool skirts; but, *peu importe*, from the waist up at least they were silk, and, so thinking, Jadwiga sank promptly into her seat in order to conceal as far as possible the inappropriately clad part of her small person.

A large audience was crowding in to fill the house from floor to roof, an audience such as no other theatre in the world gathers within its doors. Strange, striking looking women in the boxes and best seats, hereditary habituées of the place, with dyed hair piled high on their heads and rouge on their cheeks; old women trying to look young, yet having withal a grand air as if they were survivals from Molière's own time. Above, in the top gallery, were workmen and women in their working clothes, while between these two extremes were ranged all ranks of Parisian life; and all were alike expectant, eager for the play with that critical interest in the drama as an art that makes of it an art in France.

"Ah, but it is beautiful to be rich as well as high

born!" sighed Jadwiga, looking through the Doctor's opera-glass at an elegant woman whom she had singled out as a duchess at least. "Rank without wealth is but a painful memento."

Jadwiga's weak point was her noble birth, a fact which she invariably and promptly impressed, directly or indirectly on each new acquaintance, feeling that it covered her indigence with a robe of dignity that mere plebeian poverty could never wear. She had stamped her whole genealogical tree ineffaceably on Letitia's mind, Letitia who nevertheless persisted in maintaining that the only value to be attached to one's ancestors was a physiological and psychological one.

"Tell me their dominant characteristics, physical and mental, Jadwiga, *ma chère*," she would say when the little Payeowska waxed boastful; "the shape of their heads, the turn of their tempers; their virtues, their vices, their diseases and their deaths, and I will tell you whether I think you have reason to be proud of your descent."

But on this side of her genealogy this Payeowska was mute; while on the other she was incorrigible, as Dr. Trux would have found out then and there had not the historic three knocks saved him. The curtain was going up and Jadwiga forgot what she was going to say; forgot that she was not rich; forgot to be envious of Letitia who was looking her handsomest, flushed and happy, with the Doctor bending over her—absorbed, indeed, both of them,

in the play, but conscious of each other and that each was of the other, none the less ; forgot even to resent the Russianism of Ossinsky whose melancholy face in its frame of black turbulent hair was near her own as he leaned forward, sombrely intent on the noble drama unfolding before him. With all her weaknesses the Payeowska was of those real high-borns whose race is the proudest one of all, the lovers of science and art.

"France deserves well of the nations," said Dr. Trux when the curtain was down again. "A people who can support such a theatre as this, and fill it with such an audience for such a play, deserves the respect of the civilised world."

"The French deserve well of the nations in many ways," said Ossinsky. "They are for instance the one culture people of to-day that has the courage of political experiment."

"Yes," agreed Jadwiga. "And as a consequence perhaps," she added wickedly, "they furnish medical science and general literature with more morbid specimens than any other race."

"Isn't that rather because they are quicker to recognise and franker in confessing the truth about themselves?" suggested Letitia. "Still I do think that Paris at least is largely pathological. And the saddest city, this gay Paris, that I have ever seen."

"That is because you have studied medicine in it," said the Doctor. "Study medicine anywhere else and you will come to a similar conclusion."

"Yes, the whole world is sick," assented Ossinsky, gloomily, "sick unto death."

Dr. Trux looked at him with a gleam of humour in his keen, quiet eye: "And I suppose you would prescribe an indiscriminate dose of dynamite and dagger?"

"Yes," answered Ossinsky. "Kill, kill, kill! All those should be removed who interfere with others' living."

"But who shall decide who they are?" asked the Doctor.

"Elegant looking people those, over there in that second loge," remarked Jadwiga irrelevantly, as she scanned the audience once more.

Ossinsky shot a black glance in the direction she indicated: "*Bourgeois!* Pigs!"

"Oh, if you please, not pigs at all," disclaimed Jadwiga. "Aristocrats I am sure: I think *I* can tell."

"*Tant pis*," observed Ossinsky, looking still more vindictive, while Letitia and the Doctor laughed.

But the curtain was rising again on the palace of the Theban kings; and the present was again dismissed for the past.

Jadwiga was the first to return when the play was finally over, to the mundane details of the modern moment.

"Let's hurry out, *do*," she whispered to Letitia. "My coat is so shabby for this part of the house." And as they passed along the corridors she eyed

enviously the sumptuous wraps the departing *grandes dames* were folding luxuriously about them. "One feels so *ouvrière*," she added, really fearing in her naïve self-consciousness that all these fine people were noticing her.

Letitia silenced her with the gesture one makes in brushing a gnat away. The play had left her soaring on Olympian heights, and thus to be brought to earth!

The young men were silent too, each impressed in his own way by the grandeur and the pathos of the poem and the perfect art of its presentation.

Not till they all stood together at the omnibus station, waiting their turn to ride, did they begin to talk about it.

"Do you still think it is not worth while to go to the theatre for tragedy?" asked Letitia of Ossinsky, who had enjoyed the terrible drama so much that he was quite cheerful in consequence.

"By no means, when the mimic tragedy is done so well. It is a fine thing to see the fate one feels personified. But how many, do you suppose, of those who looked on to-night at the Greek poet's great allegory, realised that they too are the victims of fate, a fate more inexorable, more pitiless, more unescapable than the picturesque anger of a mythological god."

"And that fate is?" she asked as he paused.

"Heredity—physiological, social, political. Dis-

ease, poverty, oppression—that is the sort of retribution our angry gods exact."

"And who are our gods?" asked Jadwiga irreverently.

"Our race, our world, the cosmos that embraces all and each."

"Did you get anything out of it for yourself?" asked Dr. Trux of Letitia as they rode home together on the top of the omnibus which they had to themselves, their companions and the other passengers having taken seats inside out of the cold of the keen frosty night, whose full moon, however, these two had declared, was too beautiful to lose.

"O yes," she replied, "I always get something for myself from anything great. Indeed I think that is what my æsthetic enjoyment consists in. The emotional stirring up, the personal impetus to do great things myself, to accomplish something the world shall praise me for."

"You will, I think," said the Doctor, smiling at her energetic tone. "You will succeed, but success may involve much sacrifice."

"There is none I would not make."

"Even to your woman's prerogative."

"What do you mean?" she demanded in her turn.

"Husband and children," he answered bluntly, coming thus brusquely to the point he had meant, since first he met her, delicately and circumspectly to approach.

"I do not think that necessary," she replied earnestly. "Indeed, on the contrary, I think a woman's success necessarily includes them, for by success, as you know, I do not mean mere achievement, but the fulfilment of one's self, the living out of all that is within one, and much of the best in a woman does not come out at all till husband and children evoke it."

"And you think a woman can do both well? have a career I mean, and a family too?"

"Assuredly. Why not? Does not a man combine them? I own that it is more difficult for a woman, but it is none the less possible, and her success is all the greater when she does combine them."

"Then marriage too has its place in your scheme of existence," he said, pleased and yet in a way disappointed to find her opinions already formed on this subject which he had rather expected to suggest to her first himself—along with himself.

"Yes," she replied frankly, though with a troubled look he could not see, for they were riding through a narrow street and the moon just then was shut out. "I should not consider my life complete without it."

"We thought we'd come up and see what you are doing," said Jadwiga's voice behind them as she skimmed up the steep winding stair leading to the imperial, with Ossinsky behind her. "What are you talking about?" she added, kneeling down on

the seat behind them, and thrusting her pert visage in between theirs.

"We were wondering," replied Dr. Trux, blandly prevaricating, "why the Greeks, who produced so much that was great, produced so few great women."

"*Mon Dieu!* I shouldn't think it would require much wondering to account for that!" exclaimed the Pole, sitting down tailor fashion to keep her feet warm. "Consider what the Greek women were: as wives, mere producers of citizens for the state: at best, cultivated hetæræ like Aspasia, but—hatæræ still. There wasn't much chance for greatness under such conditions. Women will not be great till all the opportunities that enable men to become great are equally open to them, and have been for an equal length of time."

"Mademoiselle Payeowska is right," said Ossinsky. "Women have not, and never have had since civilisation began, a fair and equal chance with men. They have had to take what man, the stronger physically, has chosen to give them. It is a wonder to me that they have never thought of combining and using the one thing all men agree in valuing them for, as a means to attaining their rights. If they would refuse to marry, or to accord the equivalent favour to men till they got what they want, they would soon bring their tyrants to terms. It would of course have to be a national, or better still, an international, movement, to be successful."

"I have thought of that too," said Jadwiga quite seriously. "But women never could be got to do it. They are too essentially centripetal as regards their own sex ever properly to combine. Besides the majority of them are too anxious to marry," and she sighed and shrugged her shoulders as she followed the others down to the sidewalk, for the omnibus had come to Saint-Sulpice and they must change vehicles or walk. They chose to do the latter, and they were all soon home, for the young men had not far to go after leaving the girls at their door. Ossinsky had lived in the neighbourhood ever since first making their acquaintance two years before; and Dr. Trux had moved into it the day after he had introduced himself to Letitia.

CHAPTER VI

A WOMAN'S CLUB

THAT little talk of marriage on top of the omnibus had made Letitia and the Doctor lovers—not yet declared indeed, but she knew that he would speak and she was ready with her answer. First of all she would tell him of her past:—there should be no concealment, she promised herself; no shadow of deceit between them. She had little fear of the result, with his broad tolerance, and yet—she was glad the days were so busy as to prevent their seeing each other alone for nearly a week. He was carrying on some investigations at the hospital that required his constant presence there, and prevented him from joining her at *déjeûner*, their usual time for confidences. Though he dined with her every night, Jadwiga was always present, and Ossinsky too had taken to dropping in at their restaurant for that meal. But there were glances, touches of the hand, and other loving hints that would have made her happiness complete had it not been for the consciousness she had of a painful

ordeal to be passed before that happiness could be really hers.

One stormy evening, however, the two young women were left to dine alone in their usual restaurant,—a Bouillon, in the Boulevard St. Michel, near the Lycée St. Louis. A nice class of students frequented the place, serious, decent young fellows; and there were fewer *dames de quartier* than in the restaurants nearer the Sorbonne and the Seine. The two girls always occupied the same corner table in the upper room, and this evening they sat some time before ordering their dinner—at the suggestion of the waitress who did not want to lose the extra tip Dr. Trux always slipped into her hand. Moreover the mam'selles étudiantes seldom ordered wine when they were alone, whereas when the messieurs were there two quart bottles was the call. At the Bouillon the wine as well as the napkins were extra, and Jadwiga never took either when alone.

But they waited in vain: neither cavalier appeared, and they finally proceeded sulkily to their spinster repast.

"It's club night!" said Jadwiga, suddenly breaking over the chocolate éclaire she was eating for dessert, the silence that had lasted since the soup.

"Is it?" responded Letitia absently. She was thinking that if she were the doctor she would have managed to get there, though the night was so bad, and the journey from the Salpêtrière a long one.

"I shouldn't think you would be so indifferent," Jadwiga was saying tartly, "at the prospect of Monsieur Blanc."

"Monsieur Blanc?" echoed Letitia vaguely.

"Mon Dieu! I have been telling you about him for a week!" exclaimed Jadwiga, exasperated. "You are not getting *hystérique*, too, are you? over your work at the Salpêtrière—you are so *distraite*."

"No, I am not *hystérique!*" exclaimed Letitia tartly in her turn, nettled by this allusion to the Salpêtrière and the look that made it sting. "But I have something more important to think about than the doings of a revolutionary club."

"So I perceive—*lately*," replied Jadwiga in her most disagreeable way. "Nevertheless, I should think, *whatever* your distractions may be, you would, as a woman *fin de siècle*, take an interest in its most burning questions."

"I am not incendiary enough," responded Letitia sarcastically, then she laughed at the wrath that flamed out of Jadwiga's blue eyes, and added more amicably: "But tell me once more about Monsieur Blanc. This time I will attend."

It was a minute or two before Jadwiga could make up her mind to respond, then she said: "He is a follower of Elisée Reclus, and one of the most active of the French"—she looked cautiously about her and lowered her tone—"*anarchists*."

"Do you mean the geographer Reclus?"

"I mean the anarchist Reclus. O yes; he is a geographer, too."

"You are incorrigible, Jadwiga," laughed her friend.

"I have the courage of my convictions," said Jadwiga with a toss of her head.

"Then why didn't you drop a bomb down into the audience at the Comédie the other night, for instance, and blow up a lot of those people you disapprove of? That is the sort of thing your anarchists advocate, is it not?"

"But *I* don't," snapped the little Pole, teased and angry at the other's sarcastic tone. "You know perfectly well, Letitia Berkeley, that I do not advocate violence except as a last resort. Bombs are drastic doses to be prescribed only for those who can't be cured in any way short of killing, as the Czar, the Pope, the Sultan of Turkey and—and all others in fact who stand prominently in the way of human progress."

"When human progress rises above the level of those people it will sweep over them of itself, as resistlessly as it did at the Reformation, at our American Revolution, at the Great Revolution here. My dear Jadwiga," continued Letitia earnestly—for she really feared that her friend's erratic ideas might sometime result in serious harm—"**can't** you see that it is madness for the individual to try to move the mass faster than the mass can go?"

"If everybody thought that way there never would have been a Reformation or a Revolution either," said Jadwiga. "Someone must lead that others may follow."

"Well, you are not a Martin Luther, or a Washington, or even a Charlotte Corday."

"I am a Payeowska, however," replied the Pole with her most noble air.

Letitia abruptly changed the subject: "You didn't tell me what Monsieur Blanc is going to talk about."

"Anarchy, of course. He is just out of prison, and is constantly dogged by the police, who may descend upon us to-night and shut us up. Consequently the cowardly ones will of course stay away," and Jadwiga's thin pink lips curled in a contemptous sneer.

Letitia looked at her a moment in silence, then she said quietly that she would go.

The club referred to had been organised by the women students of the École de Médecine for the purpose of promoting social intercourse among them. The members, who numbered about forty, were, like the women medical students generally, mostly Russians and Russian Jewesses; but a German or two, a couple of Poles, and Letitia also had joined. The plurality of Russians, however, inevitably gave the peculiar cast of their race to the club, which quickly lost its social character in political and revolutionary discussion and intrigue. Indeed for the

majority of its members mere sociability was impossible, they were too poor, too hard-working, too terribly in earnest to meet even once a week without an object as serious as themselves. Besides there was an historical necessity upon them as Russian students to talk of revolution and exchange revolutionary ideas. Moreover race hatred, intense, irrational, unjust, still further antagonised the ordinary social instinct in them. The pure Russians hated the Russian Jews who responded in kind; while together, Gentile and Jew alike, they hated the Poles, whose fiery little representative Jadwiga defied the one and scorned the other with a fury that flamed into fearless evidence on the slightest provocation; then she too fell into line with the Russians in hating the Germans with the hatred of the Slav for the Teuton. Yet, despite these racial antagonisms, all were bound together by their common calling and their common sex, and by a stronger bond still, which, however, was hatred again: hatred of oppressive political and social conditions against which they were all more or less openly in revolt. In this they were united, and they spent their time when together in their club reading and discussing papers they had themselves prepared, or listening to addresses from invited speakers on such subjects.

In all this Letitia was an outsider. Nobody hated her simply because she was an American. There was indeed no little envy of her on this account—

the advantages the fact implied seeming greater to these foreigners than they actually are;—and there was some latent personal feeling too in regard to her greater good looks—she was by far the handsomest of them all—and her greater apparent prosperity, for she managed to keep up a certain appearance on her small patrimony, which, with true American recklessness she was spending, principal and interest, for the diploma she knew would enable her to earn more. The feelings, however, that these advantages of hers aroused in her club-mates did not prevent her relations with them from being as cordial as her own reserve would permit. But she was reserved toward them, she could not really like them, they were so different from herself: doubtful where she was confident, depressed where she was buoyant with the buoyancy of vigorous health, a sanguine temperament, and a nationality that did not necessarily negative her innate hope. She had not even in common with them the bond of a political grievance as concerning their common sex, for though she felt at times impatient of the disfranchisement of women, she also felt convinced that it would endure no longer, in her own country at least, than the willingness of the majority of women to submit to it. And though she did have a grievance against society, she kept all the theorising and dissenting into which it had led her proudly to herself, shrinking sensitively from the least hint to these women of what she had done, a reserve that

not even Jadwiga's prying and suspicious curiosity had ever pierced.

The result was she seldom went to the club meetings, but she kept track of them through Jadwiga who regularly attended, and as regularly came home so enraged that she left very little unsaid. Scandal, innuendo, ridicule, criticism—she would serve it all up, spiced with her own special spite.

This night, however, Letitia was glad of the excuse the club gave her for not going home, where she would have had to pretend to study while her thoughts were absorbed by something else. Then, too, Jadwiga's sneer about the cowardly ones remaining away, had had its effect.

They set out accordingly from the restaurant for the club, which met in a house in the Rue de la Glacière, a shabby street in the southwest of Paris which Russian revolutionists had made *suspecte* by inhabiting. As they turned into it from the Boulevard Port Royal they stopped their chat and drew their umbrellas well down over their heads, for these club meetings were generally "shadowed" by the police, and this one was sure to be. The night, however, was favourable to them. The thick mist-like rain obscured the narrow ill-lighted street which just here was particularly lonely, the long, blank wall of a military barrack bounding it on one side, a large lumber-yard on the other. Beyond the latter was the house they were going to, and, quickening their pace almost to a run, they gained it without

being seen; and slipped through the archway that led under the front building to another in the rear at the top of which was their club-room.

It was an uncanny place, this rear tenement. Not a ray of light showed from its blank front, which seemed to rise indefinitely into the misty darkness of the night. Inside its entry a small dirty window opened into a metal-worker's shop, whose forge, still aglow, sent a dull red gleam against his grimy face, bent even at this late hour in labour over it, while his ragged wife and ragged children stood listlessly about him. They were Russians, Letitia could see, as she flashed past his window in Jadwiga's wake, Jadwiga always in the lead on these occasions, quick, sly, noiseless as a cat in her movements, and happy at the thought that she might be outwitting somebody. Indeed, even Letitia, whose conscience so far as conspiracy was concerned, was void of offence, always found herself acting stealthily under these circumstances, stealing in and out and dodging possible pursuit as if she had a bomb in her pocket. She got a certain satisfaction out of it too, which was a purely romantic reflection of her juvenescent days when she had "raved" over Scot and "adored" Cooper's Indians. It was this made her enjoy, in a way, the discomfort of creeping up through these musty halls which were black as caverns underground, except where a seam of light would show about the ill-hung doors.

Up five flights of rickety stairs they had to feel their way as best they could. Usually there was no light even at the top, but when guests were expected the first arrivals were more considerate, and so it happened that they were met at the end of their climb by the tall Russian secretary of the club, with a candle in her hand.

She was a fine-looking, red-haired girl, who had been expelled from Zurich for participation in some plot against the Czar. Here in Paris she was under surveillance, which made her always cautious. She was holding the candle, now, so that its light should fall upon the faces of those coming up, while her own was in shadow.

"O, it is you!" she exclaimed, with something both of relief and disappointment in her tone. "You made so much noise"—Letitia, too fastidious to guide herself by keeping her hand on the dirty banisters, had stumbled on the staircase below—"I was afraid it might be——"

"No; they 're not around yet. We did not see one," interrupted Jadwiga, meaning the police, and she remained behind to whisper mysteriously with the secretary while Letitia went on through the hall to the club-room.

It was of a piece with the rest of the house; bare, cheerless, and not very clean. The two windows were shrouded with thick curtains of coarse, dark stuff that prevented any light from within from getting out, and any air from without from getting

in. The furniture consisted of a half-dozen rough wooden benches without backs, and a plain deal table. The small fire-place yawned black and cold, a receptacle for the sweepings of the room. The narrow shelf above it was adorned with a row of faded prints of the club favorites: Prince Krapotkine, Sophia Perovskaya, Vera Zassulich, Ibsen, Darwin, Bebel, and Tolstoi. There was no beauty in the room, and no comfort: the members had to keep on their outer wraps till the heat of their bodies warmed it. Some one, indeed, had brought in for the occasion a bright Russian cover for the deal table, and someone else a brass samovar that stood now upon it, cheering all present with its cozy promise of a cup of tea.

They were talking about these pleasant additions as Letitia entered, admiring the gay table-cloth and the shining samovar; and when the president of the club, who lived in the house, brought in a second lamp with a dainty lace-fringed silk shade, the exclamations of appreciation and delight were loud at this further touch of prettiness to their poor bleak room. They felt its depressing baldness, they often spoke of it and of the improvements they meant to make in it, but these were never made, for the necessary funds were never forthcoming. Most of the members were too poor to pay even the two francs annual dues that kept the club going, and had to be admitted to membership free of charge; while the few who were better off had more pressing

claims on all they could spare. Consequently the club-room remained unimproved, adding by its bare and ugly aspect to the sombreness of those who gathered in it, and playing, no doubt, a large though unrecognised part in the fierce revolt against unequal social conditions that so often made its shabby walls resound.

There was to be a full attendance that night, others perhaps than Letitia preferring to run the risk there was in coming, to incurring the stigma of cowardice if they stayed away. Those who were not already there when she arrived, came in afterwards, singly or at most in pairs, with hasty steps and an air of relief when the door had closed safely upon them. There were some invited guests too—older women—on the wooden benches which were set in straight rows across the room from side to side.

Plain, sallow-faced, indifferent to personal appearance was this congregation; as utterly unlike an ordinary collection of women as the topics they discussed with intense interest were unlike the topics ordinary women choose. There was a lot of "shop" talked of course: the lectures, the clinics, the professors were exhaustively considered; and when one girl came in with an armful of medical books which she had got from a circulating library, the others pounced upon them with the voracity of that book-hunger that is the worst want the poor student knows. But other subjects were

also discussed: the Pope's Encyclical, just out, on Socialism; a recent debate of world-wide importance in the English Parliament; a big strike just on in the United States and the causes that lay behind it; the wrongs of the working-classes with the dicta of Proudhon, Karl Marx, Henry George *et alii similes* on the subject. Such were the topics that were dwelt upon with a reach that showed expansion far beyond the day-to-day domestic mind.

CHAPTER VII

THE AMORPHIC NIHIL AND THE PERSONAL FACTOR

THEY had been sitting there and talking thus some time when the tall secretary came in, leaving Jadwiga as her substitute on guard in the hall. Rolling herself a cigarette she sat down to smoke it nervously. The hour for the lecture had come, but the lecturer had not. She was an attractive personality, this young woman student, more like a youth than a maid with her tall, lithe, strong figure, short hair, and large, muscular white hands. A brilliant mind, she might have had a career, but that she stood pledged and already compromised in the cause she had embraced. She was in the flood tide of womanhood, but her indifference to men was apparently complete.

"O, the young gentlemen!" she would exclaim disdainfully, when, as to say truth sometimes happened, the talk in the club would take that turn. "If you are going to discuss them I shall betake myself to something more inspiring," and she would roll herself a cigarette and withdraw into her own thoughts. To-night, however, her silence was not

disdain, but a strained and anxious suspense which gradually subdued the conversation going on about her till it finally ceased altogether, and the other women too sat mute and apprehensive, with furtive eyes that sought and yet avoided the others' glance.

The sudden opening of the door sent a perceptible shiver sweeping through them, which, however, was as quickly followed by an audible rebound and murmur of relief as Jadwiga's beaming face appeared, and behind her the speaker of the evening.

He was a tall, gaunt, bent old man, with deep-set black eyes, and long, unkempt grey hair and beard. His clothes, once black, were yellowed with the wear of many seasons; his linen was rumpled and soiled, but nevertheless there was an air of gentility and faded elegance about him, and his expression was melancholy rather than fierce.

"Some derelict of society become its foe," thought Letitia, tracing with keen, unsparing eye the lines of failure in his face, as she scrutinised it closely for the abnormalities that alienists have found in the criminal, the revolutionist, the genius, and the insane.

Monsieur Blanc in his turn had his eye on her; the moment he had entered the room his quick glance had singled her out from the rest; her smarter clothes, her different bearing, her clear complexioned beauty,—in which particular only the tall secretary could vie with her at all,—making, each one of them, their several impression. And when she was presented to him as an American he greeted

her with special cordiality. He had not often the pleasure, he said, of finding one of her nationality among his hearers. He hoped her presence was indicative of a much to be desired advance. To which Letitia, who did not consider it necessary to tell him that she was not of his persuasion, made a non-committal reply.

The door was now locked to guard against surprise, the secretary bracing her broad young shoulders squarely across it so as to cover the keyhole. Then the audience settled down to attention, while the lecturer, who had taken the seat assigned him at the head of the table, arranged his notes, glanced shrewdly at the faces before him, and then began in his dry, consumptive voice and finished mother-tongue.

"When your committee honoured me with the request that brings me here to-night, I realised that an extraordinary opportunity was offered to me. It is indeed a great privilege to be able to expound one's views to a young, scientific, and special audience. An audience, too, of women, of the exceptional women who feel within themselves powers and capacities that impel them beyond the narrow bounds that still hedge in the majority of their sex." (His hearers looked flattered.) "It is a privilege, however, that the anarchist more than any other can appreciate, for the anarchist more than any other understands and reckons with the actual and potential power of Woman. Youth, Poverty, and Woman-

hood are the trinity of the anarchist's faith, in which is his hope, by means of which his propaganda spreads. "Without women," said Bakunin, the great master anarchist, "there can be no revolution." *With* women, I add, revolution will ultimately succeed, for by revolution I mean the overthrow of all existing wrongs, the heaviest of which weigh heaviest on women." (A murmur of approval that dared not break into applause, rippled through the room.) "Remember this, my young friends, take it to your own hearts, impress it on your less enlightened sisters: the anarchists have from the first proclaimed your full and perfect equality with men; have sought your aid as equal seeks the aid of equal, inviting you to fight with them the common foe and share on equal terms the commom gain." (Murmurs of "It is true. It is very true. He is right.")

"And who is this common foe? The Bourgeois, your tyrant, who would never, if he could prevent, let your voice be heard or your will have way beyond the narrow limits of the household he calls your kingdom, and has made your *tomb*, wherein he has buried and would bury still all your higher faculties: your intellect, your liberty, your self-respect, all in short that makes you fit for anything above his lust. It is *he* who shuts you out as he does the proletarian from all that is best in life. *He* keeps you down when you would rise, making your sex a bar to your progress in every way. It is from *him* that you have had to wring bit by bit, like beg-

gars pleading for a bone, the few facilities for education that have been opened to you." (Renewed murmurs of applause and approval for the speaker.)

"The whole régime of the bourgeois has been and is against you, from his religion, which is the apotheosis of your enforced subjection to him, to the wares in his shops wherewith he lures so many of your weaker sisters into wasting over foolish, barbaric finery the strength and energy that should go to better things.

"And when he has done this for you, when he has reduced you to his sultana or his drudge, has he completed your degradation? O no, not yet! For he sinks all of you lower still by setting some of you apart for his exclusive use in an exclusive way, branding you like the cattle in his marts that he may riot at his will and yet feel himself secure from the penalty nature meant such licence to incur. You, the elect among your sex, you who behold the streets of Paris with enlightened eyes, and walk the dread wards of its hospitals, you know to what a depth the Bourgeois can reduce the womanhood that bore him."

(Ay, they had seen it, they did know it! For an instant all their faces darkened with the same thought, quivered with the same emotion; one common flash of resentful hatred.)

The speaker's deep eyes gleamed as he went on: "But for you, for you, there is the bridal wreath of virtue, which you must wear, WHICH YOU MUST

WEAR, or he—forsooth, he will not wed you. Or if he does it is an act of grace which makes him feel himself to be a very god in magnanimity."

(The flame in Letitia's face flared up into her brain, and the red demon of her pride rose up in towering disclaimer. NEVER! Better the dry rot of a loveless life than marriage as a favour!)

The speaker meantime was proceeding: "And worse than all else, because the cause of all else, is your political degradation, your state of servitude. One-half the population of the earth, the mothers of the whole, you are nevertheless nothing in the governments by which the men you bring into the world rule over it and you! And it is the Bourgeois whom you have to hate for this, for it is the Bourgeois who rules the world to-day!"

Several of his hearers sprang to their feet as he paused for breath; and only the secretary's tense-voiced, "*St—st—prenez garde*," prevented a general outburst of applause, for he had fired them all, inflammable young creatures that they were, to a white heat of indignation. Even Letitia felt the twitch of approval in her palms, and in her knees the motion to leap up.

The orator's experienced eye saw that all was ready now for the real purpose of his coming, and a fierce arraignment of all that is poured forth in lurid eloquence! Government, possession, privilege, power, wealth, and poverty; the classes and the masses, aristocrat and proletarian, with the hated

Bourgeois figuring again as the hinge whereon all swung. The French Revolution, the assassination of Alexander II., Siberia, soldiers, priests, police, and the particular prison that had of late held him in durance vile.

Much that he said was true, much was false, or falsely presented; the whole showed the inability rightly to apprehend the situation, and the irrational impatience, the intense, perverted emotionalism of the anarchist cast of mind. Letitia saw the fallacy of his arguments, pierced with a keen eye to the truth of his position—half madness, half misery as it was; but nevertheless he swept her along with him because she too was once more all emotion: hope, fear, dread, and love.

A discussion followed the lecture, questions asked and answered over the tea which was passed round and sociably drunk to sentiments of pandestruction that should reduce to amorphic nihil the whole complicated structure of existing things.

"Why are anarchists so hated?" was a wistful one among these questions, asked modestly on a slip of paper. Those who preferred asked their questions in this anonymous way, Monsieur Blanc's rusty hat being used to gather up the leaflets which were dropped in folded, and drawn out as chances are drawn at a raffle. And most of the questions were asked in this way, since might not a spy be lurking even here where everybody knew everybody else; —and yet, perhaps, did not.

"Why are anarchists so hated?" read Monsieur Blanc who drew the questions out and took the risk of replying. "Because mankind has always hated and repudiated its saviours. Christ was the first anarchist, and they crucified him."

The next question set him talking like a saint of bettering the condition of the poor, of the duty incumbent on each and every one to try to overcome the evils that humanity suffers from. He told these young medical students that their profession would afford them special opportunities for seeing and counteracting these evils, taking them as it would into the homes alike of high and low, and giving them the power over the mind that the healer of the body is apt to get. And he besought them never to let go by the chance to prescribe the potent remedy of revolt which anarchy has prepared for all the social ills.

It was after midnight when he finally took his departure, and later still when the club members themselves began to drop away, cautiously, one or two at a time, with intervals between and in turn as they had come.

CHAPTER VIII

MEDICII AND MEDICÆ

Dr. Trux had intended to spend that night at the Salpêtrière watching the somnambulists which form of nervous affection he was just then investigating. But toward eleven o'clock he became so absorbed in something else that was occupying him, that he decided to postpone his vigil to another night, and accordingly left the hospital for his rooms. He was thinking of Letitia and wishing the morrow were come that he might see her and end this period of suspense by the declaration he had to make. He had considered the matter carefully —he was not a man to do anything on the spur of the moment—and his ratiocinations had resulted in precisely the same conclusion instinct had brought him to with a jump when first he saw her: she was the sort of woman he wanted for a wife. And he felt that he could without vanity regard himself as the sort of man she should have for a husband. He congratulated himself that there was nothing sentimental or conventionally romantic about their attachment. It was essentially intellectual, yet they

would both enter marriage peculiarly conscious of what it really meant and how much it meant. He was aware that her technical knowledge of the physical laws that form the basis of marriage affected his attitude toward her, simplifying and at the same time dignifying it, as science simplifies and dignifies what ignorance makes mysterious or vulgar.

"Such a woman is far indeed from the ignorant *ingénue* that makes the conventional bride," was his thought. "It alters the man's position; it alters the whole relation." But he felt himself equal to the change, and a sudden impatience had seized him that night to tell her so, to declare himself to her, and to get her answer. He had but little doubt of that either. He was a keen observer, and he had observed her keenly in this respect. Nevertheless, and perhaps because his laboratory experience had taught him what the will to see facts in a certain way could do with the facts themselves; or perhaps because he was only a lover like any other after all, he wanted a categorical assurance from her that what he thought he saw was so, and what he hoped should be. Whereupon he proceeded with the warmth of unreason peculiar to his state to curse the lateness of the hour which seemed to preclude the possibility of seeing her for at least ten more.

He little suspected, as he crossed the Rue de la Glacière which intersected his homeward way, how near he was to her. He had, of course, heard of the club, but not with any particularity, for she had

not attended any of its meetings since her acquaintance with him began. And yet, just beyond this crossing, by one of those chances that keep merely sceptics many who would otherwise be atheists out and out, he came to a halt before a small café whose lighted windows, pearled with the warmth they enclosed, looked cheerful and inviting from the wet and chilly street. It was evidently a cheap, almost low, resort, but, after hesitating a moment with the thought that its wares would doubtless correspond, he finally went in to find a not unattractive interior, and, to his surprise, seated in a corner of it at a table alone, Vladimir Ossinsky, smoking a pipe over his bock of beer.

"They have first-class Löwenbräu," said the latter as Trux joined him, and another bock was ordered forthwith.

"You look meditative," remarked Trux as he lighted his cigar.

"I was ruminating myself," replied Ossinsky calmly.

"I hope the cud tastes sweet?"

"What a life I have led!" exclaimed the other, more to himself than in reply. "So full! so eventful! so intense!"

"What have you done?"

"*Done!*" he repeated almost contemptuously. "It is not what I have *done*, but what I have thought, what I have felt, what I would have done, and might do!"

"Oh! from that point of view the most commonplace of us would be more or less epic."

"Before I was ten years old," continued Ossinsky, not heeding this remark, "I had asked myself, what is God? and had launched myself on that mysterious quest."

"Yes?" said Trux interrogatively, as the other paused.

"What did I find? what does anyone find in that hopeless undertaking? but disgust at oneself for having been deluded into making it. Then I turned to man. Here must be, I thought, the answer to the eternal question. Man is the crown of the universe and its all-sufficient end. But I found instead a failure worse than that of deity; a parody, a puppet in the power of forces whose origin and end he knows not, cannot know. I felt myself to be such a puppet, and I sank in my despair to the verge of suicide, when lo, a strange effulgence lighted up my gloom! I loved. Ah, I exclaimed, I have found it at last, the reason for all else! Great primal energy whose protagonist is man!"

Dr. Trux ceased to look cynically, half-indifferently at him, and became interested, for this chimed in with his own present mood.

"I was submerged by emotion," Ossinsky went on in a sort of reminiscent exaltation that made him look like the semi-madman he was. "Its sluicegates were opened and the flood came: with love, hatred, jealousy, the fury of rage, the wild tumult

of success, the crushing agony of defeat; hope and despair, joy and sorrow, sympathy and pitiless revenge;—I knew them all, felt them all, *revelled* in them all."

And he proceeded to details that made even the somewhat hardened young doctor marvel and shrink.

"At last," concluded Ossinsky, "I sank prostrated, spent by emotion, incapable of more. I was not yet twenty when that chapter too had been conned and closed."

He paused, but Dr. Trux did not speak, seeing that there were still some years of this surprising person's life to be accounted for.

Presently Ossinsky resumed: "Since then science has absorbed me, and now I have knowledge too; all knowledge potentially, since I know what it is and where it is to be found. The cycle is complete, and I, aweary, feel at twenty-five the inertia, the inability to recommence or even to go on, that makes old age."

"Say, rather, the reaction from abnormal precocity," said Trux practically. "Besides, I consider your cycle very far from complete. The activities of life—"

"Ah!" interrupted the Russian with a gesture of distaste. "What are *they?* mere adjuncts, accidents to the substantia of the ego."

"I think myself they are the most substantial expressions of the ego. You should talk with Miss

Berkeley on this subject; her view is singularly healthy and inspiring."

The mention of her name seemed to remind Ossinsky of something, for he looked at his watch and started up.

"Come," he exclaimed with an entire change of manner. "It is time to go. They will be out now any moment."

Trux could not imagine what he meant, but he rose and donned hat and coat as the other was doing, and followed him out into the night, continuing on after him around the corner into the Rue de la Glacière. The door of the archway through which the girls had passed was closed, and in the shadow of its recess Ossinsky paused and waited, while other men, muffled like him, with slouch hats pulled down and coat-collars turned up to hide their faces, skulked mysteriously to and fro, in and out of view which the mist soon shut off, or paused apart from one another; suspicious, silent, and aloof. At last Dr. Trux, shivering with cold after the warmth and relaxation of the café, grew impatient of the performance whose purpose he did not yet infer, and he was about to bid Ossinsky good-night when the door beside them opened and a man, also much muffled up, slipped out and off up the street like a wraith.

"That was he!" whispered Ossinsky excitedly. "The meeting is over."

Whereupon Trux realised at last that he was

waiting upon one of those mysterious gatherings which Letitia had told him the Russian frequented, and he was preparing, with a somewhat derisive smile to survey the departing audience, when Ossinsky suddenly seized his arm and hurried him off across the street. Looking back over his shoulder Trux smiled still more derisively as he saw two policemen approach and take up their stand before the door Ossinsky had just dragged him from. The other waiting gallants had vanished too, one following them and taking position as they did against the wall of the barracks whence they could dimly perceive through the mist what went on over the way.

Presently the door opened again and a woman came out, and after her another and another; some scurrying like frightened hares, others marching defiantly past the policemen who had been reinforced to four, but who did not, however, attempt to molest them.

"They're after Blanc," muttered Ossinsky through his teeth in a tone of sardonic satisfaction, and with a show of interest decidedly at variance with the world-weariness he had but just expressed.

The observant young Doctor marked the contrast and smiled again in his cynically humorous way. The next moment, however, his mocking mood was changed and his interest became personal and vivid as from the dark doorway opposite a certain tall and stately woman's form emerged. There was

a little one beside it whose quick and fussy movements were equally unmistakable. With a startled oath Dr. Trux bounded from his place and would have dashed straight across the street to join them had not Ossinsky caught and held him back, forcing him to hug with him the wall of the barracks, and so slip along till they were well out of range of the waiting minions of the law.

"They'd like nothing better than to lay hands on me to-night," said Ossinsky, with a delicious air of self-importance that was not altogether lost on Dr. Trux for all his agitation.

Letitia had come out of the meeting in a new mood toward her prospective lover, a fierce revolt against the necessity that she felt herself to be under of confessing what pride, self-respect, shame, womanly reserve bade her conceal from him. The anarchist had made a social rebel of her too, or rather had re-awakened in her all the old rebellion that had led up to and followed after her one overt act of revolt, making the inward admonition that was driving her on to a confession of it seem not conscience but custom; a tribute to the acquired right of the man to exact what he did not give. Should she pay it, that tribute? pass again under the yoke like all the millions before her, instead of taking the stand that some woman must take some day if ever women were to be personally free.

Doctor Trux overtook her just then, giving her

in her turn such a shock of surprise that for a moment she could not speak. And he was too angry to trust himself to do so. The others, however, were more glib.

"I rather thought we should see you," remarked Jadwiga.

"Yes," said Ossinsky, "we knew you'd be late, so we thought we'd see that you got home all right. It's a lonely walk of a night."

He included the Doctor as a matter of course, having taken for granted when the latter joined him in the café that the same purpose had brought him there. And the Doctor let it go at this, though in his anger at Letitia he felt inclined to deny it.

"Besides," continued Ossinsky, as if such gallantry should be explained, "I thought perhaps you might have trouble with the—"

Jadwiga plucked his sleeve, and, taking the hint, he waited to finish his sentence till the others had moved on out of earshot.

The Doctor on his side was waiting for his turn to speak out unheard. When it came, he asked coldly, "Will you tell me why you go to anarchist meetings?"

"I'm a good deal of an anarchist myself," was the reply he got, in defiant tones. "Indeed I think I was born one."

"You must excuse me for saying so, but I don't believe it," he returned, his voice growing warmer. He reached out boldly, and taking her hand

drew it firmly through his arm. "I have too good an opinion of your good sense," he added.

She was not to be mollified, however, just yet, and his movement had irritated her, a masterful, proprietary gesture, as if he already had the right to lay a husband's, which was to say a master's, hands upon her. Right, rights! how she hated the words!—"You cannot deny that much that the anarchists say is true. Society is wrong, hideously wrong! cruel, unequal, and unjust!"

"Well, sweeping away the little good that men have accomplished is not going to end those conditions," he answered, surprised at her vehemence. "Unless the anarchists mean to sweep away man too, for man makes society, has made it what it is."

"Yes, and society makes man."

"Individually, yes; collectively, no; and in considering society, we must consider collections, masses, not units. The individuals are bound to suffer and to fail by the million, but what matter so long as the race as a whole moves grandly on, in a slow but sure advance."

"It is hard on the individual, however," she replied, though secretly she agreed with him.

"Of course it is, and that is why anarchy is. Surely I need not point out to you the egregious egoism, the utter selfishness of the anarchists. Why, their pretended philanthropy is really phobanthropy, that would be monstrous were it not so insane.

Failures themselves in that continuation of the struggle for existence, the struggle for social success, they would pull down all which those who have succeeded have so slowly and so painfully built up."

"But surely you do not think the present conditions of society are what they should be?"

"Not by any means. That is I see, of course, how much there is that is wrong, that must ultimately be changed, but the reforms must come slowly, from within, as all organic changes come; not by violence, but by gradual growth."

He was talking seriously now, less warmly than at first, less rebukingly, and with more of an appeal to her judgment, and Letitia felt that it was time to retreat from her false position of apparent sympathy for what in reality appealed to her as little as it did to him.

"Well, to tell you the truth," she admitted, "I think in this matter pretty much as you do. That is, so far as anarchy is concerned. I went to-night because Jadwiga said that the cowards would stay away, and that wouldn't have done, you know, for the one American member. Now would it?"

"Of course not," he replied with a laugh. "If that's the case, you did quite right, and I apologise. As a matter of fact, I am glad you did go, for I wanted to see you to-night. I left the hospital because I couldn't think of anything but you, and——"

"I am *chilled* to my *marrow?*" interrupted Jadwiga, who had come close up to them again with her escort.

"Then we will get you something to warm you up," replied Trux, amiably enough, though he was wondering inwardly if some spirit opposed to his suit was always prompting her to interrupt. They were near an open café and he hurried toward it.

"But it's so late," demurred Letitia.

"You mean early," said Ossinsky.

"Oh, never mind that," urged Jadwiga who liked nothing better than lolling in a café. "It's Sunday and we can sleep till afternoon."

"No, we can't; at least not later than one o'clock. We ought to start by two," replied Ossinsky, as they entered and seated themselves at a table.

"Monsieur Ossinsky and I," explained Jadwiga, "are going to hear Blanc address a big meeting of workmen and women at—cognac of course, it's the best thing when one has a chill," she interrupted herself to say in reply to the Doctor's question as to what she would drink—"in St. Denis," she resumed. "Do you want to go?"

She was looking at Letitia, but before the latter could reply Dr. Trux said boldly:

"Miss Berkeley has an engagement with me for to-morrow or rather for this afternoon," and he glanced as he spoke imperatively yet imploringly at Letitia, whose swift colour betrayed the sudden throb of her heart.

She took but little part in the discussion that followed over the beer with which she and the others accompanied Jadwiga's cognac. The talk was of the club meeting, of Monsieur Blanc, of anarchy; low-toned that the garçon and the group at an adjacent table might not hear, but waxing warm as Dr. Trux supported the cause of society against the two Slavs, repeating what he had already said to Letitia and adding much besides. He was good-natured and impersonal in his arguments, but Ossinsky's sombre eyes soon glowed with wrath, and Jadwiga nearly wept tears of rage into her glass, whose contents were adding fuel to the native fire in her veins.

"How is it," asked Trux of the Russian in the course of the argument, "that you, with your scorn of active life, can go in for such a violent form of it?"

"It is not for myself, but for others," he replied, nettled by the gleam of humour in the Doctor's clear eyes. "I have no hope, but if I can help others to realise theirs by overthrowing the gigantic barriers that society has erected against it, there is nothing I would not do. My motive is purely altruistic."

Trux laughed sarcastically: "It's a strange kind of altruism that caters to the most brutish, the most insane and ignorantly, blindly narrow egoism the world has ever seen; for that is what it is to propose to destroy all that the better half of humanity has made in order that the worse may revel in the ruins."

"The better half of humanity!" exclaimed Jadwiga wrathfully. "Do you mean to say that you think the dominant classes the better part of humanity?"

"I do, most certainly."

"I should like to know why?"

"From the standpoint of evolution itself—success. For me that is the infallible test of fitness. Don't make the mistake, however, of thinking that by the better half of humanity I mean necessarily the rich and high-born, I mean all those in every rank of life who are struggling for and achieving success along the lines of social progress. The individual may be porter or prince, laundress or lady, the merit is the same. It is because anarchy is the negation of all this, because the anarchist is—pardon me—a fool who would set himself against the immutable laws of nature, that I despise it and him. For I believe that society, as an organism composed of organisms that must obey the laws of nature or perish, must obey them too or perish likewise. And the survival of the fittest, the success of the individual who is capable of succeeding, is nature's iron law."

"Then you would have one tamely submit to the injustice of present political and social conditions, accepting them as one does heat and cold?" demanded Jadwiga.

"O, you may grumble," replied Trux with a laugh, "even curse if you feel like it." Then he

added more seriously: "Tamely submit? No. But strive to heal the ills you see and perhaps suffer from as you would a sick or wounded fellow-being. Cure not kill, and cure moreover *constitutionally*."

"Yes, but there are diseases that nothing short of killing will cure," said Ossinsky. "You know as a physician that in certain cases if you were to do your duty to your race, to nature, you would kill, not cure. Take a consumptive for instance, or an alcoholic. Don't you know that you ought to knock such a one on the head, instead of patching him up to propagate his miserable, pathogenic self. Where is your respect for the survival of the fittest then?"

"You are quite right," replied Trux, knitting his brows. "That very idea has more than once nearly driven me out of the profession, and will prevent me as it is from ever being much of a practitioner. However, I comfort myself with the thought that nature is after all stronger than we are, and she will see that her diseased parts are finally sloughed off in spite of our patching. Then too, I think the good we can do more than counterbalances the harm we undoubtedly do in many cases."

"Precisely; and we anarchists think that the good we could do by overthrowing everything that is and giving humanity a chance to start anew, would more than balance the harm we must do in order to effect our end."

"You cannot persuade a Pole," exclaimed Jadwiga somewhat irrelevantly to these remarks, to

which she had been giving the half heed that with her passed for attention. "You can't persuade a Pole that revolt against everything is not a sacred duty."

"I should think not," said Letitia, waking from her reverie. "It's like pouring water into a sieve to try and argue with her on that question."

"That is because she feels rather than reasons about it," said Trux. "As would-be reformers generally do."

"Feel! why I have absolutely no feelings of any kind!" exclaimed Jadwiga who liked to think herself a hard and ruthless person, a sort of Lady Macbeth. "A Payeowska—"

"It is two o'clock," interrupted Letitia decisively, "and I am going home."

"We should all have to go in a minute," said the Doctor, rising too. "They are preparing to close."

The others followed, and together, walking four abreast, they crossed the carrefour and entered the street where the girls lived, keeping in the roadway between the narrow sidewalks and continuing to argue desultorily.

But Doctor Trux was watching his chance, and before they reached her door he had found it and was whispering in Letitia's ear, "Let me come to your rooms this afternoon? Just for once, I have so much to say."

Not even for him and Ossinsky had the rule been relaxed that shut men out from that top floor sanc-

tum, though they had both pleaded and stormed against it. But now Letitia, after a momentary deliberation which was really a surging to and fro of strong emotion, gave an assenting nod.

He ventured then to take her hand as it hung at her side, and to keep it in his as they walked along; and he tried to look into her eyes, but she was gazing straight before her, thankful that the darkness hid her pallor and the tremor of her lips.

"How shall I tell him," she was thinking. "Can I tell him?"

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW LOVE AND THE OLD

It was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon and Letitia was getting desperate, for Jadwiga was not yet out of the house and Dr. Trux was sure to be prompt. The Pole was more than usually perverse that day: she would not get up till the last moment, and then, contrary to her custom, she would not take her breakfast till after she had dressed—and deliberately, too—thus keeping the dishes standing on in the salon to spoil its appearance with the untimely aspect of a belated meal, and its fresh air with the stale aroma of overdue coffee.

Letitia had risen early to do what she could to make the plain little room in which love was to come to her attractive. She had had the concierge in to sweep and wash the dark wood floor, and to make the fire, which she had nourished since into a bright and glowing mass of coals.

"The contrast will be cheerful," she thought, pausing from the dusting and general tidying-up that she was doing herself to look out at the

weather, which was still rainy, dark, and drear,—real Paris winter weather. She was going to put on her most becoming waist, open a little at the throat, but not till after Jadwiga was gone, lest the latter should suspect that the engagement with Trux was to take place there in spite of their self-imposed propriety.

The Pole, however, did suspect; indeed, suspicion was her normal condition. She even surmised,—with her quick instinct in such matters,—the immediate object of the meeting, and that was why she was so tantalising. She saw that Letitia, who always washed her hair Sunday mornings, must have risen early for the purpose, as the shining masses were quite dry again and beautifully arranged. She saw that the sofa had been carefully brushed and the bookshelves wiped off, which the concierge never did unless Letitia stood over her and directed. And the hearth had been scrubbed till its tiling shone. And then that fire! Letitia, with all her recklessness in that respect, never would have had such a fire just for herself, even though it was her week to buy the fuel! And how she had swept the breakfast things away! scarcely giving one time to get through!

Jadwiga lingered at the window, with her shabby black hat in one hand and her shabby black coat in the other. She, too, like Letitia, was in that secondary stage of mourning when the "customary suit of solemn black" has become a matter of habit

and convenience rather than the "outward show of grief."

"I have half a mind not to go after all," she said, with malice in her blue eyes as she watched the heavy rain falling. "It is such an awful day."

There was a distinct pause before Letitia, who was arranging the table with books and papers, said calmly:

"Had you not better send the concierge, then, with a note to Ossinsky? He must be waiting for you by this time at—Saint Sulpice, didn't I hear him say?"

"Let him wait, then. It's a good thing for a man to be made to wait for a woman occasionally. Usually it's the other way.—Did Dr. Trux explain why he left us so cavalierly in the lurch last night at dinner?" Jadwiga continued to watch intently the rain-drops falling between her window and the artist's big north light over the way, but she felt Letitia's head go up and the colour flame into her face at this question, and a mean little smile of mean little malice wreathed her lips.

"*C'est un vrai bourgeois, ce docteur,*" she continued almost below her breath, "*avec ces idées banales sur les classes, et probablement sur les femmes. Elles marchent presque toujours ensemble, ces idées là.*"

Letitia heard, but still she refrained from replying, seating herself instead and taking up a book in apparent resignation. There was a look about her mouth, however, and in her eyes that made Jad-

wiga, who saw these symptoms with one of her bird-like side glances, put on hat and coat and start toward the door. There were limits to her malice too, and as she was going out she paused to say:

"You need not wait for me to go to dinner, for Ossinsky wants me to dine with him and the others in Montmartre." "The others" were Russians and Poles, who, like Ossinsky and herself, were, or thought they were, anarchists. "We shall probably not be back till quite late, *dix heures à peu près. Au revoir, ma chère, et bonne fortune*," she added with a meaning smile and a meaning shrug that were, nevertheless, not unkind.

"*Gleichfalls*," responded Letitia from between the leaves of her book, which happened to be German, and in which she was seemingly absorbed. But she threw it aside and sprang up as the door closed, and started toward her bedroom. She had not reached it, however, when the salon door opened again and Jadwiga's blond head re-appeared.

"Oh, I only wanted to say," she explained, noting at the same time—and showing that she did—her friend's sudden change of position, whose purpose she guessed, "that that tea I got yesterday is in my bureau drawer. It is the most delicious Russian tea, real caravan, you know, if you should want to use some—*avec un peu de rhum pour les messieurs*."

"*Oui, oui, merci; merci bien!*" stammered Letitia, quite confused, and she waited now till she

heard the outer door close and the Pole's retreating steps on the stairs.

Then she rushed through the change in her dress, for the moments left were few, and went back into the salon, her nerves still a-quiver from Jadwiga's rasping claws.

Outwardly she was ready at last for her lover, for as such he was coming she knew, but inwardly she was still unprepared. It had come so suddenly she had had no time to prepare for it, though she had lain awake long after going to bed and had risen early to think upon it. But all was still confusion within, and dismay at the immediate advent of that which she had been looking on as more remote. And what was she to say to him? how make him understand that the feeling that impelled her to tell him that episode of her past was not the feeling even he perhaps might expect her to have in regard to it, of being less fit because of it for the purer love he was coming there to offer her? How make clear to him the consciousness she had herself that her womanly integrity, her self-respect, her right to be proud were still untouched and intact?

"Oh God! Oh God!" she suddenly exclaimed aloud, "why must all *that* come back upon me here and now?" and she covered her face with her hands in an effort to shut out the scenes that were flashing before her: the night of the storm in New York; Philip Euston's sumptuous rooms whose sensuous luxury had stirred so sensuously her stirring senses.

Philip himself, his passionate caresses—innumerable minor details filling in the main facts to a picture whose indelible distinctness no will to forget could ever wipe away.

"Ah, therein is the wrong! the shame! the sin!" she groaned, "that to this love that I would have so different, that *is* so different, I still must bring the memory of *that!* This love which should find pure as itself the body that contains it. Ah, could we but look forward as we must look back!"

She started violently for the bell had rung, and in another moment she had opened the door to Dr. Trux. The entry was dark, he could not see how pale and agitated she was. Indeed, he was a little shaken himself by the inevitable trepidation of his errand. By the time, however, that he had hung up his hat and overcoat and had followed her into the salon, he had recovered confidence, and she her outward calm.

"How delightful!" he exclaimed, responding as she had expected to the cheer of the open fire. He bent over it for a moment, warming his hands. Then he straightened up and glanced about him—with a sense of disappointment at first, then of pleasure at the thought that he would be able to put within her reach the means whose lack made the little room so bare. As a man of means there were many things that he had come to regard as necessities from always having had them, whose absence here he could not but note. Yet the meagre little

salon was attractive to him, for it was hers, it held her; and it had, despite its lack of feminine knick-knacks, a feminine air, just as she had herself, for all her strength of intellect.

He could see too that she had been at pains to prepare for him in a truly feminine way, by enhancing her appearance He felt without perceiving exactly in what it consisted, the subtle flattery of the dressy waist which had more white in it than she usually wore, and which gave him by its cut a chance to see how white and fine-skinned was her full and stately throat. A wave of physical ardour swept over him as he looked at her, warming and intensifying the desire he was there to express.

"You know, of course, what I have come to say," he broke out abruptly. "To ask of you? I want you to be my wife."

"Yes," she replied briefly.

"And you will?" he urged in his quiet way.

"I will," she answered as quietly. Then they gazed at each other for a long and silent moment while the blood mounted up into his face and faded out of hers—faded out of hers till her very lips were white as she forced them at length to their duty.

"That is," she began.

"It is too late for any 'that is' now," he exclaimed, interrupting her impetuously. And clasping her in his arms he closed her lips with a kiss.

"You *must* let me speak!" she managed at last to exclaim.

"I will if it is to tell me that you love me," he replied in his ardour. "I don't want to hear anything else, I won't hear anything else just now," and again he kissed her.

His joy touched her, kindled hers, and by the time it had spent itself into bounds once more, her will to risk spoiling it by what she had to say was gone. With a sigh that was half relief, half regret, she let him draw her down to a seat beside him on the sofa. But he desisted from his love-making, seeing her agitation, and thinking that it was his ardour that disturbed her. By way of soothing her, he began to talk in his calm and thoughtful way.

"I knew from the moment I saw you, Letitia, that I wanted a wife—that I wanted you. I hold with you that the single individual is an incomplete one. It takes man *and* woman, woman *and* man to make the perfect being. And that too for all the functions of life. It doubles my happiness to think that you will be not only my wife, but my professional partner too. It must make our union just so much the more complete."

She leaned toward him in a sudden upgush of affection, and laid her hand on his. And he raised it to his lips, gently and gravely. It was a beautiful moment; a noble one too, and she tried to rise nobly to it. "Tell him now," her conscience urged. "You must in honour. It is his due." She opened her lips to speak, then closed them again with a quiver of distress: "Nay, not now! In a few

moments. Before he goes away, of course. But not now in the face of this. It were too cruel!"

He meantime had risen, sedate and self-controlled once more, but with his happiness and his triumph glowing in his face, and shining out of his fine deep eyes.

"I think women," he resumed, pacing thoughtfully up and down the room, "in taking active part as they are beginning to do in the larger life of the world, should affect it, by adding to it what it has not had heretofore because of their exclusion from it. I do not know what it is, that 'essential feminine' as you once called it, but I hope to recognise it through you; I think you should make it perceptible," and he paused beside her to lay his hand almost in veneration on her splendid crown of hair.

"I have tried to perceive it for myself, in myself," she replied, glad to escape for the moment from the inward struggle that was rending her, "since I came here to Paris where I am doing the same work as men, and with men. But I have not found it; I have not been able to discover any fundamental difference, any difference at all, indeed, except an individual one, such as obtains between men and men, or women and women. I think myself that the effect you look for will be in women themselves. They will change rather than make changes in the things outside of themselves."

"It certainly makes an immense change in a

woman to be sexually self-conscious in the scientific sense, or rather it makes an immense change in a man's position toward her. I have realised that since first our acquaintance began."

"Has it lessened the pleasure of it? or your esteem for me as a woman?"

"Does my errand here to-day look like it?" and taking her hands he gazed gravely down into her eyes. "On the contrary it has deepened my esteem for you by making your womanhood itself more impressive."

"That sort of self-consciousness, that knowledge of what sex really means physiologically, racially, and socially, should be developed in every girl as she approaches womanhood," said Letitia earnestly, when he had dropped her hands to resume his slow pacing to and fro. "It would make them really purer. Instead they are left to find their own way to the knowledge instinct compels them to seek. They find it by means of their own emotions and therefore often wrongly, with sorrow to themselves. It would save many a woman shame and regret to know at the beginning of her sexual life the real meaning of it, its dignity and responsibility as regards the race." She spoke with intense though suppressed feeling: she had been left thus to grope without the guide knowledge would have been, making all clear. Had she but known as she knew now the meaning and the purpose of the passion that had sent her almost without a struggle into

Philip Euston's arms, they never should have clasped her.

"That applies equally to men," said Dr. Trux, pausing by the window to gaze thoughtfully out into the rain, recalling, too, and regretting, his own unguided groping after the knowledge that a few wise and timely words could have made cleanly his.

Behind him Letitia's conscience was urging her again: "Speak! The opening is apt. Out with it now." She clasped and unclasped her hands, half rose from her seat, then sank back, unable to utter it, as he turned and approached her.

"When we have reputation enough to give our words weight we will say that, Letitia," he said, seating himself once more at her side, "so that parents and other educators may hear it and perhaps be led to heed. And if we have children of our own we will save them, if knowledge early and rightly imparted can, from the errors of ignorant instinct. It gives me hope for the whole human race when I realise what a complex, ideal, elevating emotion the primitive bond between man and woman has become in my love for you."

His arm was around her again and he kissed her affectionately as he spoke.

"Yes," she murmured, "real love is pure. And when one is capable of it," she added after a moment, "one is worthy of it, surely."

"Surely indeed," he replied, bending to kiss her hand which he was holding. Then he straightened

up, silent again and thoughtful. And presently she arose and in her turn paced the floor, from end to end of the room.

"He has said," she was thinking, "love evolves like all other phenomena of life, evolves with the individual's evolution. The passions we feel in a lower stage are beneath the love that crowns the higher. And even as we leave the lower stage behind us, we should leave its passions too. I will not revive that part of a past that is so completely passed to spoil my present happiness—and his."

She realised more fully with each moment what his feelings would be as within her too developed love's jealous, proprietary regard for the person of its object. The regard that resents as an infringement of its dearest right the fact of a predecessor.

"I bought that book of Weismann's yesterday," she said aloud, with a sudden change of expression and a swift, eager change of thought, as the volume in question caught her eye as it lay upon the table.

"Did you?" he answered, interested, and when she had returned with it in her hand to her seat beside him, he took it from her to find the place he wanted, and to read several pages aloud. Then they discussed it, after which he read again, and again they discussed; and so on, page after page, till they were deep in panmixia, natural selection, somatic and germ cells, the immortality of the germ plasm, the transmission or non-transmission of acquired characters; Lamarck, Darwin, Spencer, and the

genial German whose book had started them off. Their argument grew warm, for they differed considerably on several of these points, Letitia being an out-and-out hereditarian, whereas the Doctor's colder mind could maintain itself in a state of suspended decision between the two theories. Love was quite forgotten for the time in the keen intellectual interest of the scientific subject.

And outside the grey day grew greyer, and the shadows deepened in the room, till at last Letitia rose and lighted the lamp.

"We haven't talked at all about when we shall be married," said Dr. Trux, coming abruptly back to love again, as the light she had struck shone up in her face showing him how handsome it was with the flush and exhilaration of their talk upon it.

"*Das hat ja keine Eile!*" she exclaimed with a mischievous laugh. She was quite herself again, sanguine, self-reliant, self-sure. "When we shall dine is much more to the moment. I haven't had anything to eat since my coffee and roll before nine this morning, and I must confess to being very hungry."

"Why, I thought you were going to sleep till noon at least."

"I couldn't," and her face grew grave again.

He understood her partly and was at her side at once:

"Neither could I. Isn't it good to have the matter settled? I'm hungry too," he continued.

"Where shall we dine? Not at the Bouillon. Let's take a cab and drive over to the other side and celebrate our happiness with a really good *diner*."

She agreed, and soon they were on their way to the *rive droite* with a cabby ordered where to drive.

"Shall we do it up in French style—take a private room?" asked the Doctor when they had arrived at the fine restaurant he had chosen.

"No!" she exclaimed, with an inward shiver of disgust as the proposition reminded her of the dinners she had taken in New York, shut away *à deux* in private rooms with Philip Euston. It was all so like, and yet so different! The shadow of painful thoughts was on her face as she followed her lover into the public dining-room. But by the time they were seated vis-à-vis she had thrust the past back once more behind the new decision she had come to in regard to it, and was ready to meet him in his expansive enjoyment of the present hour.

"I am profoundly grateful to Ossinsky for taking himself and your little friend off as he has to-day," he said enjoyingly as he sipped his soup. "If he hadn't I suppose we should all be dining together off the usual Sunday fare at the Bouillon."

"Then you are tired of *purée aux écrevisses?*"

"No, but I don't like to be reminded what day of the week it is by the bill of fare for my dinner. *Plats de Jour* are all very well, but the *jour* should be changed occasionally."

They laughed together in convivial sympathy at

this, for the Bouillon fare was monotonous. Then they clinked glasses and drank some champagne, feeling happy, and well fed, and luxurious.

"I am sorry, however," resumed the Doctor, after a time, more seriously and again referring to the others, "that they are going so deeply into anarchy. It's disgusting in fact."

"Don't speak of it! I have talked and talked to Jadwiga, but apparently without making the slightest impression, though at times lately it has seemed to me that she is cooling. It is political or rather racial with her, of course. As a Pole she feels herself in honour bound to revolt, at least in theory, against government which always means the Russian tyranny to her. You cannot conceive how intense is that hatred. I cannot, even after living with her for three years, and hearing her voice it at the most unexpected moments, showing that it is ever present with her. However, I do not believe that she will ever proceed to the propaganda of the act, as they call it."

"I consider it most extraordinary that you two should be friends."

"So do I," she answered, laughing. "It is one of those friendships one cannot account for oneself. I met her shortly after I came to Paris, and within six months we were living together, and have been ever since. I think what attracted me to her first was the way she faced and defied the Russian girls who tried to snub her—they are so much in the majority

in the school that she would have been quite ostracised had she permitted it. She is exceedingly spirited, is Jadwiga. I have seen her placed in very trying positions and I have never seen her flinch. If all the Poles are like her I don't wonder one of their Czars—I've forgotten which one—said that for the peace of Russia the whole Polish nation should be swept off the earth. You ought to see Jadwiga's face when she tells that story!" and Letitia shook her head and smiled as the vision of the Pole's flushed cheeks and flashing eyes rose before her. "Then too," she added, earnestly, "we are both alone in the world—for Jadwiga and her father are hopelessly estranged—and that makes a bond."

"But you are not alone any more, dearest," he said quickly, jealously.

"No, not now," she answered with trembling lips, and shining, happy eyes.

"As for Vladimir Ossinsky," she resumed when the moment of emotion was passed, "it is not so easy to analyse him. However he is so super-subjective that I hope he, like Hamlet, through 'thinking too precisely on the event,' will fail to reach it."

"That probably is what will save him if anything does. Has he ever rhapsodised to you on his internal evolution, his *Charakter Entwicklung?*"

"Indeed yes; it is his favourite theme. I don't believe he thinks of anything else but himself."

"I have wondered lately if he were not thinking of little Mademoiselle Payeowska too."

"No! you don't mean it!" she exclaimed, genuinely surprised. "I never thought of suspecting that! To be sure her toleration of him, being a Russian, has seemed to me one of the most contradictory contradictions of the many in her make-up, but their eternal quarrelling—and somehow one—" does not connect that sort of thing with Jadwiga, she was going to say, but she stopped before the words were out, too loyal to her friend to utter them. Aggravating as the Pole was, as she had been that day in particular, Letitia liked her.

"Perhaps the consciousness of my own guilt has made me suspicious," said the Doctor slyly, whereat she blushed and looked pleased.

Chatting thus about their friends, about themselves, about whatever suggested itself, they finished their dinner leisurely, lingering long over their coffee while he smoked his cigar. It was well on toward ten when they finally started for home, on foot. The rain had ceased and a rising wind was sweeping the clouds away, unveiling here and there a star set in the deep blue distance of the night.

Down the Avenue de l'Opéra they went, and through the great gateway of the Louvre, pausing in the midst of the Place du Carrousel to look up at the grand mass of the palace, impressive in any light; then on to the bridge that spans the river here, pausing again to note the gay effect of the myriad lights bordering it and arching it over where other bridges

crossed, while its swift current flowed darkly between.

"The analysis of its water, however, takes all the romance out of the Seine," said Letitia, leaning on the parapet of the bridge and gazing down into the liquid depths below. "Typhoid and cholera bacilli are almost always to be found, along with a varied and death-dealing assortment of other bacteria."

This brought them back to professional topics, and they were still discussing them when they turned the corner into Notre Dame des Champs, where they soon saw by the light away up in the windows of the little apartment under the roof, that Jadwiga had returned. So with some whispered words of love and a long pressure of the hand, they parted at the lower door.

"I have something to tell you," began Letitia when she had entered the salon and confronted Jadwiga, who had evidently only just returned for she still had on her outdoor wraps.

"No need," was her brief response with her eyes on Letitia's happy face. In the pause that ensued her own facile visage expressed a whole gamut of feelings, from envy to generous sympathy which made her at last throw her arms around Letitia and congratulate her as a friend and a woman should. Then she drew back to gaze inquisitively, eager for the details.

But these Letitia had no intention of confiding, at least not then when she was still warm and palpi-

tating with their thrill. It was only the main fact of the acknowledged and accepted love that she was ready, eager indeed, to divulge, partly because it was such a pleasant thing to tell, but principally because she knew Jadwiga would feel hurt by any delay in the announcement. A new consideration and kindness were stirring within her toward Jadwiga, toward all the world. So now instead of rebuffing this prying little friend by proud reserve or a deliberate snub, as she had so often done before, she said diplomatically:

"We have been talking about you and Vladimir Ossinsky, and we think you ought, for your own sake no less than for his, to use your influence over him to cure him of his anarchist craze."

"Who says I have any influence over Vladimir Ossinsky?" demanded Jadwiga with forced coldness, but she had started at Letitia's words and her cheeks had grown red and her whole small person more alert.

"Dr. Trux," replied Letitia. "He thinks Ossinsky is in love with you."

"In love with *me?*" cried Jadwiga with a gasp of unaffected amazement. "Vladimir Ossinsky in love with me! *Anybody* in love with me!" she added bitterly. "*C'est conter des chansons, ça!*" and she went into her bedroom, humming, as if to show how much of a *chanson* she thought it.

Letitia waited for a few moments, smiling and expectant, for she saw that Jadwiga's elaborate indif-

ference was assumed. But the latter did not return to the salon and finally she too left it to go to bed.

"Good-night, Jadwiga," she called when she had put out her candle and was getting under the covers.

"*Bonne nuit*," responded Jadwiga, who always spoke French when she wanted to appear nonchalant.

But presently she came creeping into Letitia's room, barefooted on the bare floor,—such superfluities as slippers she did not indulge in.

"*Mon Dieu, qu'il fait froid ici!*" she exclaimed in an embarrassed tone as she entered—Letitia had opened her window of course.—"You didn't use any of the tea," she added.

"No, dear, to tell you the truth I forgot all about it," replied Letitia apologetically, rising in her cot as Jadwiga sat down on the edge of it, a queer little figure, in curl-papers and a black flannel night-gown, illuminated by the light shining in from the salon.

"I was thinking," said the latter with whom the tea was only a pretext, "that it would be nice to have a little entertainment up here some evening, just the four of us, you know, to celebrate your *fiançailles!*"

"What nonsense!" laughed Letitia, but in a tone that did not absolutely reject the proposal.

"Of course," continued Jadwiga, still with that unwonted embarrassment, "you will want him,—the Doctor, *your* Doctor,—up here often, and there is no

reason why you shouldn't. After all it is absurd of us to deny ourselves such social pleasure for fear lest somebody we don't know or don't care for should say what is not true. And if we let him come, Ossinsky will naturally expect to come too."

"Naturally he will," and thereupon they both laughed, softly, implyingly.

"Well, good-night, *mein Kind.* I am *so* glad of your happiness."

"Good-night, Jadwiga dear," and the two friends embraced and kissed each other as they had not done before in all the three years they had lived together.

"But I ought to have told him," was Letitia's last thought before going to sleep, "I ought to have told him."

CHAPTER X

A FESTIVE INTERLUDE

JADWIGA had an exaggerated conviction of her own unattractiveness. She was hyper-conscious of her physical defects: her diminutive figure—just not dwarfish—her little stub of a nose, her stiff, dull-blond, unabundant hair. She could have told —but she would have died sooner than do it —exactly in what degree she considered them severally responsible for the masculine neglect she suffered from as only a sensitive and naturally man-loving, matrimonially inclined woman can. She was keenly observant, as we have seen, of all that went on around her in this particular, not only as concerned Letitia, but also as concerned every other woman within range of her inquisitive, periscopic blue eyes, both inside the medical school and out of it. She never went anywhere, to the theatre, to a restaurant and the like, without looking to see and seeing what women were receiving this intoxicating incense of sex to sex and from whom. And as for more serious affairs, her head was crammed full

of them. She knew that the Russian Jewess, who had been dissecting at a table near them, had won the affections of the tall Dane who shared the cadaver with her; she knew that the waitress who served them in the Bouillon, and the Frenchman in the mixed suit who dined at the next table were lovers; she knew that the artist, whose studio was opposite their apartment, was going to ask the golden-haired English girl, who went to Colarossi's art school near by, to marry him—she had followed and watched them a whole afternoon in the Luxembourg Gardens (when she ought to have been at her anatomy and they at their painting) in order to ascertain this; wondering the while, with a vicious desire to do it, what the innocent-eyed *Anglaise* would say were she, Jadwiga Payeowska, to tell her about the other girl, the *Française*, who had lived with the artist all the year before!—She knew that the porter at the *crêmerie* in the Rue Bréa where they bought milk was in love with the big, blond *blanchisseuse* round the corner in the Boulevard Mont-Parnasse, who in her turn, the hussy, stayed much longer than business required when she carried washing home to the good-looking druggist in the next house to the artist's over the way; she knew that the fascinating French widow *au deuxième* in their house had two lovers: the fat, rich old fellow who came in his carriage afternoons, and the slender law student who slipped out mornings, on foot; she knew—she knew in short everything of the kind, licit and illicit, that

came within her ken, and she suffered with a dull depressing sense of personal humiliation at being left out as she seemed to be from this thrilling game of hearts. So convinced was she of this that, when finally a trump did fall her way, she failed, she who was so alert for others, to perceive it, till Letitia, roused in her turn by her lover's hint, called her attention to it. The surprise that she had shown at the suggestion that Vladimir Ossinsky cared anything for her was not assumed. It came like a thunderclap to her, but when the first stunning shock of amazement was over she found that she had sub-consciously noted many little things that tended to confirm it. The effect was magical, and the next few days witnessed a transformation in Jadwiga Payeowska which only such appeasing of such hungry vanity as hers could bring about.

The following Saturday night found the four young people assembled in the little salon up aloft in the street of Our Lady of the Fields. They were dressed for the occasion : the young women in their silk waists and best black skirts, with corsage bouquets presented by the Doctor ; the latter and Ossinsky in dress suits and boutonnières, also the Doctor's gift and matching their ladies' favours. Letitia's and the Doctor's were white, Jadwiga's and Ossinsky's red in delicate deference to their anarchist leanings.—Ossinsky generally wore a red necktie for the same reason, but he had left it off that night. The Doctor had also sent in a lot of cut flowers, and

these were arranged about the room in beer and wine bottles, there being no vases in this economical *ménage*. The young men had brought their lamps to help out the illumination, and the room as a consequence was gaily bright. Its central point was of course the table, a regular dining table that nearly filled it with a fine expanse of white linen suitably laid with all the paraphernalia of a festal repast, the whole outfit having been hired from the caterer who furnished the collation. He was a Pole, discovered by Jadwiga heaven only knows how, and he gave a liberal discount for the sake of their common mother tongue which she fired off at him with all her swift volubility. She made the bargain and the Doctor paid the bill. The collation was really splendid: caviar with an appetiser first, then game, salads, aspic and fruit jellies, cake and punch. Ice cream was also of the fare, but that was kept in its freezer in the kitchen till the time for it should come. The Doctor had proposed champagne, but Jadwiga, who had charge of the entertainment, had vetoed that and had made him buy for her instead a long list of ingredients for the punch which she mixed after a receipt which was an heirloom in her family, as she proudly informed them when at last they were seated together at the table with the big bowl of it before them.

"It's worse than Warburg's tincture," said the Doctor, laughing. "I wouldn't let a patient drink it," but he looked thirstily into the bowl nevertheless.

"Oh, neither would I," said Jadwiga. "Nor let them partake of any of the rest of this stuff at this hour of the night. But, *mon Dieu*, what's the use of studying medicine if one doesn't commit a little dietary indiscretion now and then."

"On the principle of those mediæval sinners who made sure of their dispensation before committing their crimes," suggested Ossinsky who was in good spirits and looking remarkably well. His hired dress suit with its show of white shirt front became him though it did not fit.

Jadwiga laughed gaily at his remark. She was in high spirits too. Her affair was prospering. Ossinsky had not only continued all his usual attentions during the week—walking home with her daily after the last lecture and joining them at dinner along with Dr. Trux—but he had also taken her out two evenings without the others—to anarchist meetings. At least they had started for the second, but she had happened to remark as they were crossing the Boulevard des Italiens on their way to Montmartre that she was thirsty, and he had insisted on leaving the omnibus and going to a café for a glass of beer, over which they had lingered so long, chatting and watching the bourgeois pigs promenading by, the evening being mild enough to sit outside, that when, finally, they had started off again it was not toward the meeting but toward home they had turned; a result that had made Jadwiga's blue eyes

gleam with triumph, as if in some way she had gained a point thereby.

"*Warum so ruhig, Du?*" asked Dr. Trux of Letitia. He liked to speak to her in German with its sweet and intimate thou, enjoying the complex psychological effect that this simple little pronoun can produce, the sense of drawing nearer, as in actual physical approach to the person thus addressed. We have robbed ourselves, we English-speaking folk, in letting our thou drop out of use.

"Am I quiet?" she asked in reply. "I am having a beautiful time."

And thereupon they all agreed that it was much pleasanter to have their celebration thus to themselves, than to have attempted to include in it any of their many mere acquaintances in the medical school, as Jadwiga had tentatively proposed.

"One gets socially selfish over here," said Dr. Trux complacently. "Or rather one realises how few people one has need of. A friend or two"—he smiled at the pair opposite—"and"—he turned to Letitia with his lover's eye filling out his sentence for him so much better than could words that others' ears must hear.

"We all seem to be pretty thoroughly detached as to home connections too," he continued. "How is it with you, Ossinsky?"

"My parents are still living, my father is a village priest. If you know what a Russian priest and a

Russian village are, you know what that means," and Ossinsky shrugged his shoulders and elevated his eyebrows with a self-commiserating air.

"I don't, but I infer," replied the Doctor with a laugh. "You won't go back there to settle, I take it, after you get through here."

"That has been my intention, in order to atone for his religion by spreading mine."

"I didn't know you had any."

"*Mais—la révolution, l'anarchie.*"

"Oh—nonsense!" cried Trux, remembering where he was just in time to refrain from a stronger expression. "My dear fellow, if you persist much longer I shall put you down in the list I am making of the *dégénérés* I meet. I don't see exactly where it comes in either. Your face is remarkably symmetrical and your anterior cranium is good. But how about your occiput? I haven't examined that," and he made as if to rise for the purpose, but Letitia caught him by the arm and kept him in his seat for Jadwiga was getting flushed and vexed.

Ossinsky, however, obligingly turned about so as to bring the back of his head toward the Doctor, remarking quietly as he did so: "Quite normal too, you see. I can give you all my measurements if you want them. I took them when I got to that chapter in *L'Uomo Delinquente*."

This raised a laugh that restored good humour,

and Jadwiga's face was clear again as she divided what was left of the salad between the two young men.

"I was so outraged at the hospital this morning," she remarked by way of further diversion. "Yesterday a woman was brought in suffering with neurasthenia, really very ill, yet nothing one could localise. At least I could find nothing and I couldn't get the internes to pay any attention to her. They are all working up special subjects and she didn't happen to fall under any of them. Oh, Dascot prescribed for her in his supercilious way, but, *mon Dieu*, this morning she was dead. I told him plumply I considered it his fault, and do you know how he answered me, the beast? 'She ought to have had my kidney disease.'"

"Oh!" exclaimed Letitia condemningly, while the Doctor smiled as if he had heard that kind of thing before, and Ossinsky shrugged his shoulders with the regulation medical student air of cynicism.

"I promise you, *mes amis*," continued Jadwiga with heightened colour, "if I fail to get my diploma I shall write up the Paris hospitals—a regular *exposé*."

"They are no worse than others," said Dr. Trux. "It is the same story everywhere: Vienna, Berlin, New York. Hospitals are the practice-ground for the medical man, his drill-room, where he acquires skill and experience for his career. It is inevitable that he should think more of himself than of the

subjects he exercises himself upon. Where his object is a special class of cases his apparent egoism naturally becomes more pronounced."

"Apparent," repeated Letitia, "then you do not think it *is* egoism?"

"Not in the narrow sense, for when the special skill is acquired the services it can render to the race are just so much the greater. It is a perfectly fair exchange: the race pays at first for what it is ultimately to profit by. And the classes at whose expense this skill is acquired are precisely those that the race can best spare."

"*Mon Dieu, que vous êtes aristocrat!*"

"In the broadest meaning of the term yes, Mademoiselle Jadwiga, I am. And the more I see of disease and degeneration the more I become so."

"Well, physiologically speaking, I suppose we all are that," said Letitia. "However, one may at the same time have sympathy and the desire to save."

"The professional instinct to heal, assuredly," replied her lover. "The physician who hasn't that should change his calling."

"And turn butcher, that's what I told that man Dascot," said Jadwiga with malicious satisfaction. Then she turned to Ossinsky with quite a different expression, and asked him if he didn't want to help her change the plates and get the ice cream out of the freezer, which of course he rose with alacrity to do. And while they were out in the kitchen, open-

ing the mould, he told her he thought she would make an excellent housekeeper, and she replied that if it were for a house of her own she would prefer it to practising medicine.

Meantime, in the salon, the fiancés were improving the opportunity to exchange a kiss, and so to make the moment the best of the whole evening to them.

When the cream had been despatched, the men lighted their cigars and smoked while they finished the last of the punch, which had proved to be a most delicious beverage.

"I hope, however, your ancestors did not imbibe it very often, Mademoiselle Jadwiga," said Dr. Trux, really in earnest despite his jesting tone. "If they did I should tremble for you," and he looked with keen eyes over smiling lips, at her eager little visage that told so plainly of overwrought nerves beneath.

"An effete family probably," he thought. "And there's Ossinsky, on the down grade too. Son of superstition and flying off to the other mad extreme. It's to be hoped they won't have children if they marry." Then he turned to look at Letitia in appreciative enjoyment of her fine and healthy physique, of herself, the woman he loved and who loved him as the glance which met his assured him.

Ossinsky, watching them out of his sombre eyes, wondered if he had not been precipitate in concluding

ing, as he had five years before, that he was done with love.

"*I* think so," exclaimed Jadwiga just then, in reply to some remark of Letitia's. "Don't you?"

And Ossinsky, thus appealed to, out of his own thoughts stammered, "Yes."

CHAPTER XI

LOVE VERSUS CONSCIENCE

THE months that followed were months of fine experience for Letitia. Love permeated and transformed her intense nature to its profoundest depths, and from within her the world without, all life, took on a new significance. She felt herself in accord with the universe and at one with her race, whose primitive impulses and its most complex met and merged within her to make up her multiform emotion. Instincts and ideals, desires and lofty purposes played their varied parts, while potential maternity, which had stirred in her before, spontaneously but vaguely as the echo of a whisper, found full, unhesitating utterance now, and modulated with its solemn and tender promise the passionate pæan her soul was singing. Her children and his, the incarnation of their love, smiled through the roseate mist of the future at her, sweet little dimpled faces but half defined, like the cherubim in the cloudy background of the Sistine Madonna. With what softness, what yearning, what immeasurable

kindness the mere thinking of them filled her! and with a stern proud sense of power too, for would she not repeat herself in them and so through them in future generations? remaining thus in spirit on the earth after her individual part in it was done. An immortality which to hope for required no shutting of the mind to nature's laws. And her personal ambition, her professional views changed with the general change. Her desire for success, and her determination to achieve it, were indeed stronger than ever with the added incentive of resolve to win from this man she loved the consideration and respect such individual success alone commands. But, mingled with these egoistic motives were nobler elements, born of a better comprehension of the bearings of her future work. She had come to regard it as something more than a means to an end for herself, she had come to appreciate its humane and altruistic possibilities.

It was of her professional work and of his, of their life work, they talked most when together, long happy hours of mutual confidence and counsel, in which the physical bond between them, strong to begin with and growing stronger every day, was controlled and dignified by the intellectual interests that absorbed them; a love so noble and elevating that Letitia felt herself at times half divine in her conscious capacity for it.

Yet there was a shadow over it, the shadow of the past, that followed her, spectre-like, to thrust upon

her happiest hours the chill of regretted reminders. She had looked back upon that episode with the larger vision of her present standpoint, understanding, sympathising with, even condoning, the crisis as never before, but condemning it too as never before, and repenting of it with the agony of a proud and loving woman who would be all that the man she adores would have her. It was as a maiden that her lover loved her. She saw it in his glance, heard it in his most ardent protestation, felt it indefinably yet unmistakably in his most passionate caress; and she loathed the weakness, the cowardice that made her tacitly acquiesce in his assumption, when honour, conscience, her sense of what was due to him and to her own best self, her desire to have perfect truth and perfect faith between them, bade her speak. Again and again she nerved herself almost to the point of making the shameful confession, but each time she faltered, postponed, that she might once more consider the possibility of keeping her excruciating secret forever from him. Her rose of love whose savour was so sweet had its cruel and rending thorn.

"I promise you, Letitia, if Vladimir Ossinsky stays in Paris to-day to hear that illogical old lunatic Blanc get off his tiresome stuff about soldiers, police, and bourgeois, instead of going to Versailles with us, I shall drop him."

"No, you won't, Jadwiga dear, you will stay here

too and go to the *séance* with him," replied Letitia, in a tone that made her vis-à-vis look conscious and happy even while she tossed her small head and shrugged her small shoulders in seeming denial of the charge.

It was Sunday again, and seven o'clock in the morning, but they were already dressed for the street and drinking their coffee with both windows wide open to admit the luscious air of a fine July day. They had grown paler and thinner since the winter. The spring and early summer had been one continuous grind which had filled even their Sundays with arrears of work till Jadwiga declared she was on the verge of nervous prostration, and Letitia's robust physique had shown signs of strain. Noting this, Dr. Trux, who, as graduate physician, was medical director to the company, had ordered a day off, and at dinner the night before they had all agreed on an excursion to Versailles.

"I had hoped he was cured," said Letitia, continuing the subject of Ossinsky and anarchist meetings. "He has not been to one, has he, since that bomb-throwing affair?"

"No; I think that disgusted him with the whole thing as it did me. It was so idiotically futile. That is," added Jadwiga hastily, resenting the I-told-you-so smile which Letitia could not restrain, "he sees as I do that that sort of violence won't do; that it will only intensify present conditions, not change them. What is one bourgeois the less? or

even a thousand. Besides," she continued naïvely, "now that his last year is upon him he is beginning to realise that he will have to have a career, try to be somebody himself, in which case he will of course have to drop such ideas," and Jadwiga paused to drum on the table with her fidgety little fingers, and to think of the arguments she had used and would use in order to convince her Russian of this. "But now and then his conscience apparently troubles him," she resumed presently, "and then he starts up, as he did last night after all our arrangements were made, with a declaration of renewed allegiance. He is an uncertain quantity, is Monsieur Vladimir. You never can tell what is coming after he has sat communing with himself in that way of his."

Jadwiga sighed as she spoke: Ossinsky had indeed been trying. She was not even yet sure of his intentions, and she considered it a positive grievance that he had not declared himself, if he was going to, before the "cramming" which her negligence through the winter had made necessary. Why should she waste time, strength, and money for fees on these medical studies, if she was going to be married. In which case she would certainly give them up. She was decided on that, though she kept her renegade resolve to herself, ashamed to have Letitia know it. The latter's example did not fire her in the least. It was very admirable of course, and *fin de siècle* for a woman to be so much in earnest and set, as was her friend, on a career of her own. Theoretically

she maintained the same thing herself, and really believed that every woman could and should do likewise, but practically, "*pour moi*," she would say to herself when she considered the matter, "'*Souffrez que je l'admire et ne l'imite point.*'"

Ossinsky did not conclude to remain in Paris that day, and eight o'clock found the four of them waiting their turn at the tramway station on the Quai du Louvre—they had decided to go that way for the fun of the ride. Early as they were, there were others ahead of them and many more behind, an amusing and motley crowd made up of small Paris shopkeepers and economical foreign tourists; all gay and good-natured except when, as each tramcar rolled up, the scramble for places began. With two stalwart young men to do their pushing for them, our young women found something to laugh at even in this, and presently they were off, occupying the best seats on top just behind the driver.

"It's the slowest way to get there except on foot," said Jadwiga, beginning to think of the objections to the route now that they were started on it.

"Oh well, we're not in a hurry," replied Dr. Trux, who had planned the excursion. "Besides there is a great deal to be got out of it. It gives one a chance to study the people, to peep into their houses, to get a kaleidoscopic idea of their habits and modes of life. For that reason I always like to take, especially over here, this kind of conveyance. There's London for instance. Who that has ever tried it

can forget the delight of riding around that wonderful city on top of a 'bus?"

"How I should like to see London," said Letitia.

"You shall, and the rest of the world besides," he answered. "We will see all there is to be seen before we get through, and together."

"That will be the best of it," she murmured, though there was no need to lower her tone, as the others too were having an aside.

"We could begin this summer if we were married," he continued eagerly. He was becoming urgent on that score, objecting strenuously to the long delay she proposed, till the end of her medical course, another whole year. "I have money enough, you know, for the two of us," he added, cautiously. Money was a delicate topic to approach with her. With plenty of it in his pockets he had to submit to seeing her deny herself everything but the barest necessaries; submit in silence too, after having once ventured to suggest that she might let him pay her expenses.

"I have a letter here," said Ossinsky, bringing the party back to its usual quartette again by displaying the missive before them, "from an old friend of my university days in Petersburg. He was two years ahead of me, and has just taken his medical degree in Vienna. He was one of us at the university, but he has turned bourgeois, I fear, for he writes that he has just inherited a considerable sum of money with which he proposes to set up a sanitarium for nervous

diseases at Nice or Mentone, or some other favorable place, where rich people congregate, and he offers me—*me!* the position of assistant when I shall have finished here."

Jadwiga, whose quick little brain had instantly leaped forward to some such conclusion as this, smiled in self-congratulation, while the Doctor exclaimed:

"Excellent! *Je vous fais mes compliments*, Ossinsky. Places like that are an opportunity."

"And do you suppose that I shall accept?" demanded the Russian disdainfully. "Devote my life to easing the ills of plutocrats and nobility? For aren't they the people who profit by such institutions?"

"Precisely, my dear fellow. But aren't they also the *patients* who *pay?*"

Ossinsky scowled and moved uneasily in his seat, but made no reply.

"I should think," said Letitia, who had been watching Jadwiga's face where a dozen different emotions were showing themselves at once, "that you would regard it as a most welcome means of escape from the necessity of returning to your own country whose condition is so painful to you."

"But that would be surrender," objected Ossinsky, looking at her with tragic eyes.

"Discretion is the better part of valour," said the Doctor. "My dear fellow, what will you surrender? Siberia or the gallows. For that is how you will

end if you go back to do what you propose. And where would your people be after your sacrifice? Precisely where they are now, or only so far advanced as the glacier-like movement of such a mass will take them. When the Russian people or any other people are capable of self-government and free institutions they will have them, for they will achieve them. Until that is the case such idealists as you simply sacrifice yourselves in vain. Besides your ideals are all wrong."

"Order," interrupted Letitia, rapping her lover's knee with the handle of her sun-umbrella. "We are not going to talk about that to-day. We are out for pleasure."

"Second the motion," exclaimed Jadwiga promptly, while Ossinsky slipped the letter back into his pocket with a, "Well, I haven't refused my friend's offer yet."

Dr. Trux was the only one of the party who had not been to Versailles before, but the others went into the palace with him, leaving him, however, to lead the way through the splendid suites of rooms, which he did eclectically, merely glancing into some, lingering long in others.

Ossinsky, who did not care for pictures and of course despised the associations of the place, said that the whole thing, museum, palace and all, should be destroyed.

Jadwiga thought that would be going too far, and as if it were a reason, told them how an an-

cestress of hers had lived there as maid of honour to Maria Leszcinska.

Whereupon Letitia said that she had always had a profound pity and no little contempt for that royal lady and her predecessor, the consort of *le Grand Monarque*. "Because they were so insulted and because they endured it," she explained when the others laughingly wanted to know why. "Think how their rivals were flaunted before them! preferred to them! And history and romance have glorified the wrong. Who are the women we associate with Louis Quatorze and Louis Quinze? the de Montespans, the Pompadours, and the Du Barrys; their mistresses not their wives."

"That's a fact," said the Doctor, "though I have never thought of it before in that way. Royal marriages are such cold-blooded affairs any way, that one does not associate the idea of warm human emotion with them at all. Pompous old sinner," he added, as they paused before one of the numerous portraits of Louis XIV. that adorn the walls of the palace he reared. "How vain-glorious he was! how boastful of his transitory triumphs!"

"It's a national trait," responded Letitia. "The French are a boastful race. Look at Paris, fairly bristling with the symbols of success. They can't even wear their republicanism calmly, but must blazon it over their doors, with their eternal *liberté, égalité, fraternité*."

"None of which they possess," added Ossinsky

sardonically. "And how gracefully they ignore their defeats," he continued. "It's precious little one hears about Waterloo or Sedan."

"No, you have to go to England or Germany for that," replied the Doctor with a laugh.

"It is natural for a people to ignore its defeats," exclaimed Jadwiga. "The conquered do not love to emphasise their shame." Her face darkened as she spoke: there were times when she remembered that Ossinsky was a Russian and she a Pole.

"Ah!" murmured Dr. Trux, with a deep breath of admiration, as they came to the noble statue of the dying Napoleon, "that is great!"

"Because the man himself was great," said Ossinsky, who was utterly devoid of feeling for art *per se*, but who lingered now willingly enough, silent, contemplative, lost like the others in the thoughts this work of art suggested. "It's all a matter of association," he added when they finally moved away. "If we did not know anything about him, we probably would not give a second glance at the sculptured stone."

The remark brought on a general discussion of æsthetic feelings and principles that lasted till they were through with the galleries, and ready for lunch in one of the restaurants outside the palace gates.

Afterwards they started for the Trianons, but they got separated on the way, Jadwiga and Ossinsky straying off by themselves, which left the lovers free to follow their own inclinations. They accordingly

dropped further sightseeing for that day, and wandered idly about the stiff and stately gardens till they found an unoccupied bench in a shady nook, where they sat them down to rest and to enjoy the content of being thus together and alone. And they were very near together this tranquil, happy afternoon, so near that she was not surprised when he took her hand and said earnestly:

"Letitia, do let's be married this summer. We can go to London as soon as the semester is over and have it done with in three weeks. We can be married there by special licence so that nobody need know it till you wish to have it known. Nobody that is, but Jadwiga and Vladimir. We shall have to let them into the secret of course. But you can avoid all red tape at the university by continuing to be for everybody else Miss Berkeley till you get your M. D. Paris is a big place fortunately, and in our stratum of it at any rate, one can do pretty much as one likes. You see I have thought it all out."

"Yes, I see you have," she replied with a laugh, which had in it, however, the throb of deep emotion. Ah, this was love! this was love indeed, deserving of fruition!

"Well?" he urged.

"Very well," she answered. And with a handclasp and a long, long look the compact was concluded.

"To-day's the 20th, isn't it?" the Doctor presently

proceeded. "Let's start by the first. The semester is as good as over by that time. Ten days and three weeks — twenty-one days—thirty-one, — a month more only!"

"No!" she cried, recoiling at the nearness of the final decision which the event must mean for her. "We will not go till the fifteenth at least. That is quite soon enough."

"For you, perhaps," he said, rebelliously.

"For you too," she returned lightly, again masking her feeling under a laugh, for this enamoured insistence was like a tropic sun warming her own pulse to its heat. Within she was his completely; soul and body gave themselves up to his. But she forced herself still to keep up the outward semblance of autonomy. "We will make it the fifteenth, or better the sixteenth."

"Not a day later than the fifteenth, I swear it by my head!" he exclaimed, veiling his emotion too, in a play of jest.

In the same vein she went on: "Then, you know, I can see you off, before I come back here to work on my thesis."

"See me off? Off where, if you please?"

"Why, off to America, of course. Haven't you been saying for the last month that you were going back in September? Or was that only a *ruse de guerre?*" and again she laughed out—and up, from her heart.

"All's fair in love or war," replied the other happy

lover gaily. Then he sobered into real seriousness once more: "No, dear, it wasn't a ruse. I would have gone back if you hadn't agreed to go *with* me to London instead. Now, of course, I shall come back here with you, and wait till you too are ready to return. It would have been hard to go, heaven knows," he added, letting his passion show again in all its depth and ardour. "But I could not have stayed on here in this way with you, and not have you for my wife—for my *wife*, Letitia."

"Come," she stammered, slipping away from him, and standing up. "Come. We shall have to hurry if we want to see them at all, *les fameuses eaux de Versailles*."

"Oh, damn the *eaux* of Versailles! I don't want to see them. I want to stay here." But she was out of reach of the hand he stretched out to detain her, and was setting off resolutely, so he of course had to follow.

It was a Sunday when the fountains play, and the crowds had been running about for nearly an hour, watching one after another of them break into bloom. Now everybody was hastening toward the fountain of Neptune, the last and largest of the lot, and thither Letitia and her lover bent their steps. They had scarcely seated themselves, as hundreds of others were doing, on the grassy border about the big basin, when Jadwiga rejoined them—alone. She was very pale, and evidently labouring under great excitement which she vainly strove to con-

ceal. Letitia saw at once that something had happened.

"Where is he—Vladimir?" she asked.

"Gone—back to Paris," was the reply.

"Back to Paris!—alone?"

"Yes; alone," and Jadwiga's sharp teeth and thin lips came together with a decisive click.

Letitia and the Doctor exchanged a rapid glance: evidently there had been a quarrel. Not a rare occurrence, however, so the subject was dropped. When they too were back in Paris, in their own abode, and the Doctor gone, Jadwiga returned to it of herself:

"He asked me this afternoon to marry him, and I—refused."

"You *refused!*" cried Letitia in amazement. "Why?"

"Because he is a *Russian.*"

"But you knew that before!"

"I had not *felt* it before, however, at least not as I felt it this afternoon. I did not want to feel it. I—yes, why should I not acknowledge it?—I liked him, and I wanted to marry him. Meant to, till he asked me this afternoon. Then it all came over me with a rush what, in that case, I should be doing. I, a Payeowska, daughter of Polish patriots whose blood his accursed race has spilled; I, a *Pole*, to wed a *Russian!*" and Jadwiga's small figure seemed to expand into heroic proportions, so large was the racial resentment, the passionate patriotism that

filled her soul. "And I refused him," she added in a tone tense with triumph and high emotion. "I refused him, the Russian, and I told him *why*."

Letitia, looking at her, listening to her, felt her regard for her change and deepen: respect, admiration, pity, esteem wiped out forever the half contempt that had kept it lukewarm.

"Jadwiga!" she exclaimed with responsive enthusiasm, going up to her and taking her hands, "I understand you now, your perfervid patriotism and pride of race. You *are* a noble woman! You are great!"

"No; I am not great," replied the Pole with a sudden moistening of the eye, and a droop of the lip. "I am not great. Would that I were! Would—that—I—were!" and with that she broke down entirely, dropping into a chair by the table, and flinging her arms out across it, and burying her face in a burst of tears.

Letitia waited, sympathising but silent; too tactful to attempt to stop this wild rush of feeling. Not till its first force was spent did she say gently:

"Then it hurt, Jadwiga? You really cared for him."

"Yes; I cared for him," sobbed Jadwiga. "Moreover, I want a husband, I want a home. It wouldn't be so bad if I were like you. Some other man would ask me even if I did lose one. But with me it's different. Nobody else has ever asked me before, or will again. I know it, I feel it here," and she

raised a tear-stained face, and laid a dramatic little hand on her sparrow breast. "I don't want to be an old maid," she continued passionately. "I don't want to have to make a life for myself, or any of that —that rot, as Robert would say.— *Your* Robert who is going to marry you right away. How do I know it? Why, I saw it in his face there at the fountain," she added at Letitia's look of surprise, for they had not told her. "It was in both your faces, the happiness that I am not to know."

Again she broke down, hiding her face and weeping a storm of tears, while Letitia knelt down beside her and strove to comfort her, urging every argument that she could think of against this useless sacrifice of individual needs and inclination to hopeless patriotism and pride of race.

But the blue blood of Poland stood firm.

"No," said Jadwiga finally, standing up, wept out and composed. "No. Let us not discuss it any more. *C'est fini.* I am not great, truly, as Jeanne d'Arc was great. I cannot *fight* the enemies of my country, cap-à-pie. But I *can* refuse to marry with them, and I *do*. *Vive la Pologne!*"

CHAPTER XII

CONSCIENCE VERSUS LOVE

LETITIA and Doctor Trux established themselves in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, for the twenty-one days' residence in London necessary to obtain a special licence to marry: she in a boarding house, he in lodgings near by. The arrangement was his, and in talking it over in the compartment they had secured to themselves coming up from Dover, he said:

"Of course it would be pleasanter to take lodgings together where we could have a sitting-room and things generally to ourselves. But it might be misconstrued, and—Cæsar's wife must be above suspicion."

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed, drawing her hand from his, and moving away from him to the farther end of the opposite seat.

He followed hastily, surprised at her outburst: "Dearest, why should you be offended? I only meant that were we to take up our abode together before we are married, others might say what would

not, what could not, be true. I did not for a moment mean that it might be true, my proud Vestal."

Letitia flushed deeply at the epithet, a sudden crimson gush of colour that made him add earnestly: "You said once that real love is pure. It is a great purifier too, and a great modifier. I have, of course, had my ideas about the relations of the sexes, about marriage; and they have differed more or less radically from the conventional views on those subjects. The ceremonies, for instance, with which society has gradually come to surround the simple act of union between man and woman, have always seemed to me to be superfluous when not actually absurd in their incongruous mingling of heathen symbolism and Christian sentiments. The real bond being the love, where it subsists between a twain there is marriage, where it does not there is no marriage, whatever the law on the subject may happen to be. Logically therefore I ought to want you to become my wife *de facto* pending these formalities that will make you so *de jure*. But I don't, precisely because you are the woman whom I want to make my wife."

He paused, but she did not speak, and in a moment he resumed: "It is feeling, of course, rather than reason, and a complex feeling hard to analyse. A strong factor is the consciousness of the obligation there is upon us, as social beings, to conform to the requirements of society in this fundamental detail of the social organisation as it at

present is. There is egoism in it too, the desire to have *my* relations with *my* wife all that they should be from my neighbour's point of view. But there is a nobler and more powerful element still, and that is my respect for you and your chaste womanhood."

Letitia could have groaned aloud, but she set her teeth, and he, unconscious of the stab he had dealt her, proceeded to plunge the knife deeper and then turn it in the wound:

"We are all bundles of inconsistencies, we theorists, when we come to practise. The conventionalities we deem ourselves superior to and despise, control us still. We none of us can be sure that we are quite rid of them, that in some unexpected moment they will not re-assert themselves within us to overrule our reason and direct our conduct in its stead—perhaps even decide some one of life's most weighty questions for us. I am conscious, now that I am a lover myself and *feel* as well as think about the matter, of a similar modification—metamorphosis rather it is in this case—in my views on the personal purity of women. Heretofore the restrictions imposed on women out of marriage have seemed to me most unreasonable and unjust—a selfish sacrifice of the woman as potential mother to the man as father. For, of course, there is no denying the unromantic fact that the man's desire to have undoubted heirs of his body to his property, and his power to enforce his will, are the

origin of this custom about which so much else, personal, social, sentimental, and religious, has crystallised since. I have thought, I still think, that women have the same rights to liberty in this, as indeed in every other particular, that men claim for themselves; and I have been inclined to advocate the largest possible liberty for both sexes. But now, as a husband elect myself, I see the whole matter in a different light. It is equality still that I would advocate, but equality in purity. I am as jealous of your person as a Turkish pasha."

He said this quietly, deliberately, as he had spoken throughout, but with an intensity of passion that was all the more thrilling because it was so subdued—the serious, exclusive, absorbing passion of a masterful and ardent man deeply in love.

"I could not bear," he concluded in the same calmly convinced and convincing way, "I could not *bear* to have you other than you are."

Letitia did groan aloud now, an uncontrollable outburst of pent-up pain that startled him to his feet.

"What is it?" he exclaimed. "Why, how pale you are!" and he bent over her anxiously as she sank back against the cushioned seat, white to her lips.

"It is nothing," she managed to gasp. "I am faint, that is all!"

He seized his grip and got out his flask, and poured out some brandy which he made her take;

then he would have laid her down flat on the seat and loosened her dress, but she refused.

"If you had been seasick crossing the channel, I should think it was that," he said, scanning her face with puzzled eyes as the colour slowly came back to it. "You are worn out with overwork, that's what's the matter, my dear."

He had taken off her gloves and was chafing her hands, and he kissed them from time to time as he continued in a tender, soothing way: "We will *not* go straight back to Paris after our errand here in England is done. We will go off somewhere, to Switzerland or the Tyrol, so that you can have a thorough rest in high, invigorating air. I shall assert my authority as soon as I get it," he concluded lightly, but his eyes were still gravely solicitous though she was sitting up, erect again and, outwardly at least, recovered.

"He has sealed my lips," she said to herself when he had left her at the boarding house he had selected for her out of his previous acquaintance with London, and was gone to see about his own quarters. "He could not *bear* to have me other than I am. He would not love me if he knew! Oh, God! So be it then. Such as I seem to him to be, let him think me," and she paced the floor, facing resolutely this decision which she promised herself should be final.

They found plenty to do in that three weeks' interim. She had this greatest city of the world to see and he to show her, and they saw it not only as tourists but also as physicians, being too thoroughly professional to neglect anything in their own particular line. They visited all the hospitals as well as all the museums, adding operations by distinguished surgeons to the sights in their guide book. Sundays,—the English Sundays that cast such a gloom over the comer from the continent,—they went to the Zoo, or to Hyde Park to hear the disaffected domestics and other ranters hold forth. Or they wandered about the streets getting illustrations of their studies in psychiatry in the form of the itinerant evangelists, those curious, hyper-spiritual, narrow-browed, emotional groups of men and women who pray, and sing, and preach of the glory that is to come to those who have none of it here. Or they went out of town to Kew or Richmond where the day of rest may be passed in something of the continental way, which takes such a hold of the sinner who has once enjoyed it. Then there were runs to Cambridge and Oxford, congenial pilgrimages to these two alumni, and appreciated now all the more because appreciated less in the midst of love's concentrated abstraction. For principally they loved, all else they did being merely accessory to what was within and between them. It was the first time since they had loved that they had had all their time for love alone, and they gave themselves

up to it with the energy and ardour of two very thorough-going natures.

A blissful period it was of continuous companionship, of ever-closer intimacy, which absorbed and satisfied them, and separated them from the rest of the world so completely as to make an effort even of the rare moments they spared from their egoistic duality to think and speak of that other pair in Paris, who for so long a time had been regularly a part, present or impending, of all their intercourse.

Yet what Jadwiga wrote was calculated to arouse their sympathy:

Ossinsky, it seemed, had reappeared after their departure, to press his suit again. "His visits keep me from being utterly miserable in your desertion of me," she explained, rather pathetically. "Without them this apartment"—she had decided to remain in it till the lease she and Letitia had taken of it should expire in the autumn—"so *vraiment en garçon*, would be intolerable. Therefore I permit them; *mais, c'est tout*. I shall not change what I have said. *Jamais! Jamais!* His country has ruined mine, his people have pillaged and murdered mine, pillaged and murdered my family, but so much a Payeowska still can do to avenge, and so much this Payeowska will. Poland shall triumph still."

"That little Pole will not, however; at least not in that way," said Doctor Trux with a lover's con-

fidence in the all-conquering power of love. "She won't hold out."

"I am afraid she will," replied Letitia, in whom the chill conviction would persist that for herself as for Jadwiga the happiness of marriage was not to be. The Pole's stern courage rebuked her with its contrast to the course she had pursued, she on whom lay also an obligation to her highest self, which must, if need be, take the place of love. But to love she clung, putting all other thoughts forcibly away, and giving herself up to the happiness of this three weeks' prelude to the greater happiness she promised herself should come beyond. She would have it, that happiness of a husband adored and adoring, that rich content and complete experience of congenial wedded life. It was what nature meant that she should have, her birthright as a woman, worth the purchase at any price.

There was a sweep and abandon, the abandon of an ethically sensitive soul set against itself, in the way she let the tide of bliss which rose higher and higher with each one of these swift yet slow thrice seven days, sweep her along. And her lover, for whom she,—persistent hitherto in keeping their passion to its higher plane of intellectual affinity,—had never before been ardent enough, was satisfied now, though troubled too, being too fine a soul and too closely in touch with hers not to feel—vaguely indeed and remotely, like a far-off echo of distress heard in sleep,—the storm that was raging still

beneath this shining surface of passionate resolve. She was no longer the woman who had fascinated him with her calm self-poise begot of restored self-approval; but that woman as he had never known her, rushing impetuously on in a career of passion, and to what she nevertheless knew would be to her that self-approval forever lost. Yet she fascinated him more than ever in this new guise; thrilling him with her touch, firing him with her glance, and exalting him to the seventh heaven of delight with her own desperate exaltation.

What a contradiction it was to be sure, to have to drop out of such clouds as these to the mundane level of the boarding house whither he came to join her at meals! to have to submit to the inane chatter of fellow-boarders who were as shadows to them through the haze of their all-else-excluding interest in each other! What misery when they would be actually, as they were practically, alone, to have to have all London, as it were, intruding on their solitude! For though it is solitude under any circumstances, this mutual inter-absorption of the love passion, theirs was the solitude of a crowd, and they had small opportunity for the demonstrations such love loves to make. The evenings were especially trying in this respect. The parlours were always full. So, when there was nothing at the theatre to invite them, and there rarely was in this out-of-season month of August, they walked about the streets till bedtime when they would part at her

door, sometimes with a surreptitious kiss, though oftener a simple handshake had to suffice.

"Thank heaven, there will soon be an end of this!" he exclaimed rather savagely one night. "Only four days more."

Then it was three days, then two, then but one.

The next morning they were to go quietly to the registry of the parish in which they were residing, and be married according to civil process. Neither of them desired a religious service. Both were anxious to get through with the ceremony as simply and briefly as possible. No one was to be present but the necessary witnesses—incidental attachés of the office. No one but the two in Paris had even had to be notified, Dr. Trux being as devoid of near relatives as Letitia herself. Immediately after the ceremony they were to start for the continent—Holland, Belgium, and on up the Rhine through Switzerland back to Paris for another winter of study.

All their arrangements being completed, they whiled away the last afternoon of their courtship in the Museum of Natural History where Charles Darwin's statue confronts the entering visitor, preparing him for what he is to find. They had been there before, but they came again, for the place had especially interested them. Their love was at a pause: the crescendo of passion that had climbed the scale through the preceding weeks had reached a climax where any other note than the final chord

of complete union would be a discord to the whole. Instinctively they felt this, and consequently, instead of wandering about among the glass cases more intent on each other than on what was before them, they gave their entire attention to the collections, studying them and discussing them with scientific interest. Particularly did they linger before the groups of skeletons ranged in the line of man's descent, the anthropoid apes and the anthropos himself in their startling juxtaposition.

"It is amazing," he remarked, "and humiliating too, to think that not till this century, not till our own day almost, yours and mine, did man discover the patent fact of his origin."

"My father never accepted it," she said, gazing thoughtfully as he was doing at the convincing demonstration in comparative osteology in the case before them. "Already as a college girl I had accepted it, but I never dared say so to him; and he died apparently firm in his old belief that the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,—and then made woman from one of man's ribs."

They laughed at this, both of them. From their standpoint it did seem absurd. But Letitia respected her father's memory, as she had respected in life his stern and unbending uprightness, and she was grave again with the recollection of him as she added:

"Yet my father was an intellectual man. He

spent all his time in study and speculation. He must have read and thought deeply upon the new version, but he clung to the old."

"Probably in his heart of hearts, however, he accepted the new," replied the Doctor in his unsparing way where things scientific were concerned. "There's an old fellow near New Haven, an orthodox, like your father, who has acknowledged that he lives in mortal terror of the day when science shall at length discover the connecting link and so force conviction upon him. Of course the conviction is already there, but as long as there is a show for the belief and teachings of his life, he will stick to them outwardly. Strange that men like that cannot accept the situation frankly, and reconstruct themselves and their religion to fit it! Strange, and yet fortunate," he added with a smile, as they moved on to a consideration of their cousins farther removed, the quadrupeds.

He had gone deeply into zoology as he had into all the other subjects that bore at all on his profession, and he made himself profoundly interesting now, imparting facts, advancing theories, revealing an apperceptive observation extraordinarily keen. Never had he seemed to Letitia so thoroughly intellectual, so above and beyond the mass of men. Never had she,—subjective always even in the midst of the pleased attention she was now according him—loved him so well, felt that she could love him so safely; and a beautiful peace fell upon her, a new

repose of spirit from which the past that had so persistently accused her seemed suddenly to disappear, leaving her free at last to enjoy the present to the full, and to look into the future without fear.

When they left the Museum, they strolled over to Hyde Park, still intent on the topics that it had made paramount : nature, animate and inanimate ; man and his descent ; the race and the individual ; and so on at length to themselves and the relation that the morrow was to bring them in, the old yet ever new relation of mate with mate, of male with female, of man with woman ; but dispassionately, impersonally, filled rather with an appreciation of its vast significance than with the thrill of its more immediate meaning for them. And this elemental view of it, the grandeur of the thought that in obeying instincts so sweet, and seemingly so selfish, they would be acting in full concert with the cosmic harmony, came upon Letitia's already exalted mood with influence sublime, filling her with the large resolve to enter this new phase of evolution in worthy form—stripped to the naked truth, her soul laid bare to this man's soul whose body was to unite with hers in nature's eternal round. It was no longer a passionate impulse driving her on with the whip and spur of conscience to a confession against her will, but that will itself set calmly and confidently on the truth.

" Robert," she began quietly, seating herself as she spoke on a bench they had come to by the Ser-

pentine, "there is an incident in my past I want you to know."

"In your past," he repeated vaguely, as he seated himself beside her, quite lost for the moment by her abrupt change of subject whose connection with their talk he could not see.

"Yes. And you must do what you told me once you would do: consider its motives and circumstances rather than the act itself: and judge the woman's act as you would the man's."

"What act?" he asked, still not apprehending in the least what he was about to hear.

"I had a lover once—in a certain way." She looked at him frankly as she said it, with tremulous colour indeed, but with courageous eyes; and her voice was firm, almost exultant, so great was the relief to say it at last, not merely to think it till her head reeled and her heart swelled fairly to bursting; to speak and so cease to need to think it.

"A lover! *You!* In a certain way!" he cried, realising now what he was hearing, though not its full import: "in what way?"

"In—oh, don't your understand?" and she faltered suddenly, her voice sinking as her courage fell at the look that was coming into his face.

"Do you mean that you—" he demanded aghast, "that he—"

"Yes," she interrupted him hastily, bowing her head with the shame—so much worse than even that which she had foreseen—of the admission.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, and then there was a painful pause, during which she dared not look at him for fear of what she felt, but would not see. All was gone: the large impulse within herself and the elevation of tone in him that had inspired her to speak; and they were down again on the lower plane where the personal factor rules supreme.

"Who was he?" burst from him at length.

She started and looked at him in surprise, not attempting to reply.

"Who was he?" he repeated imperiously, and he seized her arm as if to force an answer from her. "Speak, will you. Who was he? Where was it? and how was it? Tell me all, every single detail of it!"

"No, I will *not!*" she cried imperiously too, and she flung off his hand with a sudden wrathful resentment that came as a relief to the intolerable strain of the moment. But as suddenly it was gone again, and she was adding explainingly, imploringly: "Oh, Robert, the details do not matter; *he* did not matter even at the time. He was nothing to me, *nothing* but the object for my subjective state. Think of him as that, if you must think of him at all. He might have been some one else just as well."

"Then you did not even *love* him!"

The recoil in his tone made her hesitate, but only for an instant. The truth, the whole truth, must out now, whatever came of it: "No, I did not love

him. In my heart I despised him all the time for being what he was, a mere society man. It was a physiological crisis with me, the great crisis when the sexual nature wakes up. You know that such a crisis comes to women as to men. It came to me at any rate; absorbed, engulfed me. Few women know the meaning of it. I did not at first, and not rightly till too late, for I thought it was love, thought I loved him. When I realised what it was I left him, left America, left passion such as that forever behind me."

"Ah!" he groaned through his set teeth. "And he? What did *he* do?"

"Why do you harp upon *him?*" she exclaimed impatiently, indignantly. "Can't you understand,"—and she raised her voice as if to make him,—"that it was not *he*, but *I*—"

"Why do I harp upon *him?*" he interrupted her violently. "*Why?*" and he ground his teeth and struck the stretch of bench that he had put between them fiercely with his clenched fist.

"Oh, don't take it that way!" she besought him in keen distress, surprised that he should, and so exclusively as to seem deaf to all the more important factors which she had been sure would soften the blow for him and appeal to his consideration. "Listen," and she told him what he had demanded, what she had hoped he would spare her—the details of the affair, going back to the first beginnings of it in the depths of her own nature, and following it

down through the fateful move it had led her into, from her New England *alma mater* to New York; to acquaintance with rich Mrs. Ball, and through her with Philip Euston. It seemed to her, as she thus for the first time reviewed that experience in the plastic form of an ordered and uttered story, as if some fatality outside of herself had directed it, so consecutively and so necessarily did each phase of it follow on the other. It was destiny, not chance, that had thrown Philip Euston in her way at the critical moment, and had made the first exchange of glances between them the first act in a drama that could have but one dénouement. It was destiny, again, that had decided when and where that dénouement was to take place; destiny powerful enough to force the elements themselves to aid in bringing about the foreordained conclusion.

Destiny, indeed, but the destiny within us that makes us, while they rule us, our passions' slave. Terrible those forces that can so impel us to wreck for one brief moment's doubtful ecstacy our whole life's best content! Surely 'tis not ourselves that do it, but powers malign whose victims we are to be regarded, and thus not held too strictly to account!

Even as she thought it, however, Letitia rejected as sophistical this final plea of her own self-pity. And she did not speak it, nor in any other way attempt to minimise the fault she was confessing. She did not spare herself, but laid bare with a certain desperate pleasure in the pain it gave him the

shame he was putting her to. For though she did not look at him as she went rapidly, unfalteringly through her recital, she nevertheless saw because she felt every contraction and quiver of his face. Not, at least, till she was nearly at the end, and so was sure of her voice for what remained to be said, did she turn her eyes full upon him as she told him how Philip Euston had followed her to Paris with an offer of marriage and a fortune: "But I had refused him before I knew that a baser motive than the one he gave was actuating him. I would have refused him under any circumstances whatever, for I did not want to marry him—I *could* not have married him. *That* would have been, for me, the prostitution."

"*The prostitution! You!* Ah!" he groaned, writhing in his seat at the word and its hideous suggestions; ignoring, as he had all through, the larger bearings of her confession for this one particular of it which touched him, jealous lover, most. Burying his face in his hands, he let another and more painful pause ensue.

And she made no move to break it, but sat with wide eyes staring out unseeingly before her, waiting dumbly for what next should come.

Approaching footsteps finally startled them both to a more conventional posture, and when the passer-by—with a curious side-glance at their two white faces—had gone on out of hearing, the Doctor asked more calmly than he had yet spoken, but, if

possible, more sternly too: "Why have you not told me this before?"

"I have tried to—but—I could not." Her voice trembled in spite of her and sank to a whisper, but it was full-toned again as, drawing herself up, she added proudly: "It is not too late, if that is what you mean."

He sprang to his feet as though to escape this suggestion. "Come," he said, looking at his watch "it is time to go back. We are late already."

Then she rose too, and together they walked rapidly, too rapidly for speech, toward the gate whence an omnibus would take them in their direction. The conveyance came along with only one outside seat vacant.

"You take it," she said. "I will sit inside."

For the first time since she had known him she was glad to get away from him. And when they left the omnibus at the passage-way leading in from Southampton Row to Queen Square, she hurried on ahead of him.

Nor did he attempt to overtake her till she had come to the end of it where their ways parted—his room being on the opposite side of the square.

"Don't wait for me to come to dinner," he said as he caught up with her. "I may not come at all—till—to-morrow."

His voice faltered; if he had intended to say more he could not go on. Whereat her pride, which had been strengthened by the ride apart from him,

fell again to the verge of abasement, while a rush of sympathy for him, of appeal for herself, of love, tender and placating, rose to her lips. But before she could voice these emotions their current changed again with his expression, for he had manned himself sternly, and she said:

"As you please. You are free not to come at all, remember." Then she turned and walked proudly away from him, the few steps that lay between them and her door.

A telegram met her there; had come, the servant said, an hour or so before:—

"Vladimir dead. Suicide, our apartment, to-day.
JADWIGA."

She read the terrible news without a quiver even of surprise, and crumpling the paper in her hand went on up to her room, where she tossed it from her like a bit of waste, and proceeded to prepare herself for dinner, which was already nearly over, the maid had said. How curiously far away the maid's voice had sounded! How curiously far away seemed her own image in the glass!

But she did not go down to dinner after all, though she had meant to, whether he came or not. She dropped into a chair and waited, in a state of suspense both of thought and feeling, while the darkness gathered outside and entered in to enwrap her in its gloom. Unconsciously, however, she

noted the lapse of time by this approach and deepening of the night, and at length, with a great sigh she shook off the lethargy that had held her bound in blank inertness.

"Was Vladimir right?" was the first among the thoughts that had been formulating themselves during this interval, beneath the threshold of her consciousness, and now came crowding over it in ordered though unspoken speech.—"When all that he most desired was denied him, why then, no more at all, —death and the end.—Cruel Jadwiga, to force a heart that loved her to such extremes, and for a mere idea!—What a shock it must have been to her, poor thing!—And in our rooms! How strange! how strange!—She was alone with him of course. But she bore herself well, I know. *She* wasn't the one to flinch in a crucial moment. Whereas I—Oh, my God, what agony it was! What *agony!*" and she clenched her hands as her own cruel experience of the afternoon prepared to repeat itself within her, seeking involuntarily to escape from the torture of it by dwelling on Jadwiga and her tragedy.

"I wonder how he did it? Shot himself probably —with her pistol perhaps; or stabbed himself—he always carried a dagger—such a wicked little knife —no, not little, but fine, fine and slender and deadly with its two-edged blade. He knew of course just where to stab and so kill quickly," half mechanically she traced on her own aching breast the exact position of the heart.—"Or here, perhaps," and she felt

at her throat where the blood was coursing swiftly to and from her conscious seat of life.—"Ah, bah! Slaughter oneself like a pig?—No! Poison were neater, and he was an expert in them, said he might want to prescribe them instead of milder medicines when he got back to Russia and began to practise," and she smiled as Ossinsky's darkly handsome face rose before her there in the darkness, wearing the odd expression of gentle ferocity she had seen it so often assume when he made his blood-curdling propositions.

"Poor fellow! and the only violence he has ever done is to himself, and for love not hate; love of Jadwiga, queer little Jadwiga!" and this time she laughed aloud, the humour of the situation making her forget for the moment its pathos, forget for the moment herself and the greater cause she had for tears.

Ghastly mingling of the ridiculous with the sublime that makes a half-parody of even the saddest human fate!

"And to do it right there," she went on ruminating, "in our little apartment where we were all so happy the night of my *fiançailles*. Yet how tragic he looked even that night, in his melancholy mirth, with his great sombre eyes full of uncanny fire. And now they are cold and eclipsed, those splendid orbs that made his strange soul visible,—dead, glassy, repulsive, like that eye of the cadaver I was dissecting the day Robert came to the pavilion to

ask my name and to look at me. He had black eyes too, but how different from Vladimir's, or that Frenchman's at the next table who was forever trying to intercept my glance, and when he couldn't, hummed in revenge his vile French songs. How the race as well as the individual looks out of the eye, declaring itself in the first mere glance. My race and my country were in the eyes my fellow-countryman turned on me, stirring in me who nevertheless am not especially patriotic, a something no man of any other race or land could possibly evoke. And what a look it was! How sweet its challenge to love and life there in the midst and very smell of death! How different from the looks he stabbed me with to-day—so horror-struck, and then so stern! so—"

She stopped suddenly, with a catch in her thoughts like the catch of the sob in her throat, and her face contracted, but she would not weep though the tears were welling up from her tightened heart in an almost uncontrollable flood; she would not weep lest he should see their traces when he came. For he would come, surely, to comfort and to pardon before it was too late! And again she sought refuge in thinking of Jadwiga.

"Poor little Jadwiga! It may get her into trouble too with the police. They are there now, in our rooms. They may arrest—they may even suspect her—Oh, no, that couldn't be! I can tell them that, tell them that people who talk so much about killing

others, are far more apt to kill themselves than to kill anybody else. Jadwiga didn't do that quite—but almost, almost. It is almost death to put away one's love. Worse! Oh, no, I mustn't think of that, at least, not yet. I must think of Jadwiga. I must go back to Jadwiga and help her, defend her,—go back at once. Selfish that I am, not to have realised that before," and she sprang to her feet: "I will go to-night. No, to-morrow, to-morrow must do. An appropriate wedding journey!" and she laughed aloud, a short and bitter laugh that brought the whole flood that was seething within her to the surface.

"Why did I not tell him before?" she repeated, sweeping up and down in the darkness. "Why, rather, did I tell him at all? feeling as I have instinctively from the first that he would take it as he has—passionately, personally, shocked out of all ability to reason about it and be just. Why did he take so for granted that I was what his egoism would have me? A Vestal indeed!—vestal to all but him! What right had he to expect so confidently from me what he has not offered me? what I should be rated puritanical indeed even to hope for from him. Yet do I not resent as jealously as he the thought that what to me will be so sacred may have thrilled responsive to another's touch! And how many others? and what others? what woman who weds knows that? What man feels himself in honour bound to tell? though

the fact touch her as closely as in case reverse it touches him. It touches her as it touches him: —in the egotistic instinct of ownership, in the desire to be first and unpreceded in that association that is most private and most near. The ideal of purity deifies it, but strip it of that and we find a selfish motive purely, which only the power to enforce it has made into the obligation it is for the weaker sex, from which the strong, that lays it on, proclaims its right to go free. What does Paris show the woman who hath eyes to see?—Prostitution, polygamy supreme. And this London here with its shameless night parade? wherein the woman's part is stamped as criminal, whilst the man's is tolerated, excused, ignored, because the man will have it so, and because the woman lets him have his way. Would it be the same if women were equal in power to men? Hardly. But would it be better? Are women better than men? Hardly again. But different, yes, with the differentiation of different circumstances. For what after all are these sex lines that divide us so deeply that conscience itself is concerned, and woman—*I* can pardon freely in a man what I can scarcely hope to have excused in me? what are these sex lines, but differentiation, which may be traced in an ever decreasing degree till it ceases altogether, and reproduction, the meaning and the end of sex, the root and branch of matrimony, takes place within the individual economy. —Yet what a vast divide lies between such a bit of

protoplasm and man, such a bit of protoplasm and me, eating my heart out here for fear of the result of an act my reason may indeed justify, but which my moral consciousness, that reason's monitor, feels to be a stain. We are indeed bundles of inconsistencies, we theorists, and it is feeling that really rules us. It is feeling, made up of many elements, some great, some small, out of which his final judgment of me will proceed."

She had approached the one of her windows whence she could command his across the square. They were wide open like her own, as a dim light burning in his room revealed to her, a beacon flash that seemed to sweep away the pall of darkness that hung between them. Presently he appeared in the midst of that dimly lighted interior, a mere form indeed, but she knew it, and a great relief, a gladness rose within her at the sight of him:— He was stirring about, shaking off perhaps, as she had been, the aftermath of that miserable exposure she had made to him! He was coming to her at last to speak the healing words she longed to hear!

As if in confirmation of her hope, the light that had aroused it went out, and she leaned far over the sill looking down into the street where lamplight illumined the darkness. It was so late—she had heard midnight strike some time before—he would hardly venture in or care to have her do what she would best like to: rush downstairs and out to him,

into his arms, never more to leave them. But she would see him, hear him speak—no matter what the words if but their tone was kind. And she would speak to him again in kindness. Kindness! he had not dreamed the love that she could give him now, the bridegroom of her soul!

How long she hung there she knew not, she only knew he did not come. And the sorrow of it brought her at last to her knees; made her, proud woman, grovel in her pain, while the tears that she had been choking back burst forth: a terrible outpouring of her grief's very self that racked and shook her, and seemed to tear her very soul asunder. Such tears as wash away a part of life's integral fabric which never is renewed.

When Letitia finally raised her head again, dry-eyed and composed, something had gone out of her forever with the tempest that had surged up from the depths of her nature and torn its way outward leaving this calm behind.

And the night that had hung so heavy in her way, making her but now wish wildly that she could rend and fling it aside with her entreating hands, that longed to reach and sway by tender personal contact the man whom it seemed to aid in holding thus cruelly aloof from her, the night was breaking of itself. And she waited tranquilly, the hard-won repose of her spirit in her attitude, the approach of the day that was to have been so happy a one in her annals; watched its dawning with the reverent awe the

thoughtful must ever feel at the mysterious change that marks another round of time's infinity; felt herself for the moment less herself than as a part of that infinity and so above mere earth and mortal pain.

"Letitia."

It came very quietly at last, the summons she had waited till the joy with which she had thought to respond was gone, and forever. She had realised this with a chill consciousness that was half content, as she found herself passively listening to his approach which she had heard from the moment his step broke the silence of the square in leaving his house; and she had let it come without changing her position till it stopped beneath the window where she was kneeling.

"Letitia," he repeated softly.

"Robert," she replied, breaking with an effort through her numb repose to turn down to him a face as coldly pale as the grey dawn that revealed them to each other in its ghostly light. But the next instant she was flushing warm and red with the aurora of reviving emotion, for he had stretched his arms out to her in an eager, reassuring gesture that said all:

"Come, come and let us clasp thee close again. Thou art forgiven, beloved still."

"Yes," she whispered tremulously, "I am coming." And she rose from her knees, but slowly, stiffly, cramped by her long posture of humiliation and de-

spair. The pain of the movement brought back to her in a bitter flood all the cruel self-abasement of the night, and made her pause midway of the room, pale again as she muttered, "Yes, coming like a grateful cur; and if you had not called I should have had to slink away like one rejected. Oh, how it all *grinds!*" And she flung out her strong young arms, and stretched her strong young body free of some of its fatigue. Then she opened the door and crept downstairs like a thief, remembering even as the cautious summons she was obeying had reminded her, that they must not be seen or heard lest a wrong construction be put upon her movements.

"It lies heavy on all our acts, the burden of what the world—of what such men as he, O my God! who is out here now to tell me he has graciously concluded to marry me in spite of my loss of it, have decided shall be our virtue; our *one virtue* which has so swamped all the rest that the same men can say with truth that we are morally their inferiors. As if we too may not purchase at the price of that same virtue a higher morality. Ah, it is a false position all through, false! And my going back to him now is part of it!"

But she went, unlocking the door noiselessly and leaving it ajar that she might as secretly return.

He had sprung up on the stoop to meet her, eager, kind-eyed, sympathetic; but at the sight of her he started and paused, while she too stared abashed at the evidences of the night's painful vigil, whose

visible traces neither had stopped to smooth away. He indeed, manlike, had put on his hat, but she had come down to him just as she was, her head bare and her hair thrust back from her tear-stained face, and loosened by the thrusting of agitated hands.

He saw this, and took them tenderly in his to press them against his breast in loving pity. Then he drew her arm through his and led her down off the steps and up to the end of the square, where private grounds shut off the thoroughfare and made a retired corner.

"Letitia!" he exclaimed, "I ought to have come before. But you knew I would."

"I hoped you would," she replied, gravely.

"You *knew* I would," he insisted. "Don't speak like that! Don't look like that," he added, trying to retain her hand upon his arm, but she withdrew it and walked proudly aloof by his side.

"You surely are not going to resent my feeling shocked, overcome for a time by your disclosure?" he continued, stern with surprise at her manner. "It *was* a tremendous shock to me. You seemed so virginal in the highest sense. You were so coy to *me* even of your kisses, and then to hear that you had given all to another man in mere passion"—he broke off abruptly, and she, glancing quickly at his averted face, saw that his teeth were ground together under his set lips. Then as quickly she looked away while he, turning to her again, concluded with the irrepressible reproach:

"If it had been in love, even if you had told me that you loved him better than you ever could love me, I would have found it easier to forgive."

She knew the word was coming, yet it struck her with all the force of an unexpected blow, making her start and shiver, and set her teeth hard to keep back a cry of pain.

"Then it is to forgive me that you are come," she said at length, slowly. "To *forgive*."

"Of course," he exclaimed, surprised. "That was what you expected me to do, wasn't it? what you knew I would do when I could come and say it as I do now, with all my heart. *With all my heart*, Letitia, do you understand? So give me your hand once more, and let us forget that there has ever been the need of such a scene between us."

"No!" she exclaimed, stopping short and confronting him, her white face in a sudden flame. "That we neither of us ever could. Nor can I submit to be forgiven for a wrong I have not done!"

"Letitia! What do you mean now?"

"I mean, Robert Trux, that when I knew that other man I had never even heard of you. How then could my relations with *him* have been a wrong to *you*—for you regard them as such, do you not? since you *forgive* them. No—wait! Answer me this; are you what you thought I was?"

He hesitated for an instant, flushing too, then he answered her bravely: "No."

"So I supposed. So must a woman ever suppose, if she presumes to think at all on a subject that men insist shall be their own affair till they are bound in marriage. That shall not count against them as a bar to it; that—ah, cruellest distinction of all!—that shall not make them feel themselves, or be regarded, as any the less worthy of respect as husband, and as father!"

"Oh, Letitia, don't take it so tragically! You must admit that the woman's case is different. Ah, I know why you smile: you think I am eating my own words. But I am not. Theoretically I do still regard the subject as one which women should decide for themselves as individuals, if necessary to the reversal of the whole existing order of things. Nevertheless there was the feeling strong enough within me to make me wound you as I have: the old, historic feeling of the male in this respect, unjust and wholly selfish and physiologically indefensible if you will, but innate apparently—in Christianized man at least—and deep and pure as honest love itself: the feeling that a woman should be chaste."

"Ah, there it is!" she exclaimed with a bitter laugh. "I knew it! I knew it!"

"But, Letitia," he said, again surprised, "you conceded as much yourself by making the confession that has brought so much pain to both of us."

"My concession was to what my instinct told me from the first your feeling would be, but against which both *my* feelings and *my* reason revolted even

in yielding. Yes, revolted as they do now and always have against the intolerable injustice that makes a crime for a woman what a man may do, and put behind him, and not feel in honour bound to mention to his shame. Oh, Doctor Trux, a woman cannot know and *think* in this world of men without revolting, in hot hate at times, with a mental protest ever, against them and their whole social scheme, founded as it is on the mere brute postulate of their dominion."

The man before her heard in profound amazement: "Letitia Berkeley! This, from *you?* A social rebel, you!"

"Thou hast said. A social rebel I am and always have been at heart. But don't mistake me. I am not one of those fools as well who think they can successfully defy the customs and opinions of the mass. I tried it once indeed, as you have heard, but see to what a depth of defeat it has brought me." And she threw out her hands with a hopeless gesture, as if the little space that he had put between them in the backward start of his surprise, were an impassable abyss.

Indeed he was looking at her as from a distance, intent yet not quite sure of what he saw. But gradually his wide stare softened into comprehension, and drawing close to her again he said with firm conviction: "Well, Letitia, social rebel or not, whatever you are and just as you are, you are a woman whom I shall be proud to call my wife.

That hour will soon be here.—See, the sun has risen, the day is going to be fine. What is that pretty old saying?" he added with one of the rare smiles she had loved, "'Happy is the bride whom the sun shines on.'"

"The sun will never shine on me as bride," she answered sadly. "I shall not marry you to-day—or ever. You must see for yourself that marriage is out of the question for me."

"I don't see anything of the kind!" he exclaimed, indignantly and anxiously. "Letitia, this is pure raving! You are overwrought, worn out, and I won't hear any more. Go back to your room now, and try to get some rest. I shall come for you at nine. I hold you to your word."

"You can't. Your man's dominion ceases there," she replied with a faint smile of sorry triumph. Then she added gravely and gently, "No, dear friend; I am not raving. See, 'my pulse doth temperately keep time,'" and she held out her firm white wrist that he might mark its full but steady throb. "I only wish that I had had the courage to see before as clearly and as calmly as I do now what my part in life must be. I did, dimly, even when I came here with you, but I tried to deceive myself, for I loved you. And I wanted love; I wanted children; I wanted my 'woman's kingdom,' though I knew I could not have it except on terms I never could accept. The obligations of a woman being what they are, I would not marry any man without

telling him that I had failed in mine. But having told him, I could never marry him, I could not, I *could not bear* to live with you, Robert, knowing that, despite yourself, the love you gave me must forever be conditioned with a regretful if. I could not bear to look into my children's faces and remember that there was that in my past life which, to discover, would bring shame to them and cost me their respect. For who knows but that I should bring them up on the same old lines? fall back, perhaps, myself within them, and so feel that I in truth had sinned. Where would I be then? Nay, nay! There is but one course left to a woman who has done what I have done and is what I am, and that is to make the best she can of life outside of marriage and motherhood. And that is what I mean to do. Believe me, Dr. Trux, I will never be the wife of any man."

"Letitia, this shall not be?" he exclaimed, seizing her hands as if to retain her by force. "I will not, I cannot accept this as your last word."

"But it is, so help me—" she had freed herself from him, and she raised her right hand as she spoke, but even as she did so, she saw flicker into his eyes the same thought that made her drop it without finishing the oath.

"Ah, see," she said instead, with another sorry smile, "between you and me there is not left even a God to swear by. For the love is gone, my friend. Don't you too feel that it has? There

are shocks love can't survive, and ours, mine at least —yours too, I think, *yours too*—has had one of them. It is all over, all. So let us too be done."

"Do you mean here, and now?" he asked aghast.

"That is what I should prefer," she replied relentlessly. "There is nothing left for us to say, but farewell; or to do, but part."

"But I—" he began, then stopped abruptly and bared his head to the end that was come indeed. He had seen it too, and felt it before she spoke it, but he had struggled gallantly against it, this end to their hopes and to their love. But the struggle was over, and the end was come and he bowed himself humbly to it.

And humbly too, and reverently, as one leaves the new-made grave, Letitia left him standing there, and went her way, back into life, alone.

THE END.